

# SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

WITH THE GLOSS OF ŚRĪDHARA SWĀMĪ

Translated by SWĀMĪ VIREŚWARĀNANDA



# SRIMAD BHAGAVAD-GITA

TEXT, TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT  
AND OF THE GLOSS OF  
SRIDHARA SWAMI

BY  
SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA



**SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH**

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

RAMAKRISHNA MATH ROAD

MADRAS-4

::

(INDIA)

1972

Published by :

© The President,

Sri Ramakrishna Math,

Mylapore, Madras 600 004

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Ninth Impression

IX-3M 3C-9-97

ISBN 81-7120-402-3



Printed in India at

Sri Ramakrishna Math Printing Press,

Mylapore, Madras 600 004.



## PREFACE

The Bhagavad-Gita is a most, if not the most, popular Hindu Scripture. It is regarded as one of the three scriptures, the other two being the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sutras. All the great Āchāryas or founders of new sects among the Hindus have written commentaries on these three. Among them the Gītā has the largest number of expositions, for a good many of the followers of the different sects have written glosses on the main commentaries of their great Āchāryas. It can be stated without any hesitation that there is no other Hindu Scripture which has been so frequently commented upon.

Sridhara Swāmi, whose commentary we are giving here in English, was born at Balodi in Gujarat, about six centuries ago, and chronologically he comes immediately after Vopadeva, the great grammarian. He was a disciple of Paramananda Puri and his chosen Deity was Nrisimha (the fourth of the ten Incarnations in Hindu mythology). Besides this scholium on the Gītā, Sridhara has written commentaries on the Bhāgavata and the Vishnupurāṇa, known as, *Bhāvārthadīpikā* and *Ātmaprakāśa* respectively. Sridhara's present commentary on the Gītā is called *Subodhini*. It is, as

the name implies, very lucid, and at the same time brief. Though Sridhara belongs to the Advaita School of Sankara, and at the beginning of the commentary says, "After scrutinising accord'ng to my light the views of the Commentator (Sankara) and likewise the words of his expounders, I am beginning this commentary on the Gitā," yet his leaning towards devotion as opposed to knowledge is so very marked that the orthodox section at first refused to accept his commentary as authoritative. For a decision, the commentary was placed before the Lord Visweswara (according to some, before the Lord Bindumādhava) in Banarās, and tradition says that the Lord appeared in a dream and gave the verdict thus;

अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति व्यासो वेत्ति न वेत्ति वा ।

श्रीधरः सकलं वेत्ति श्रीनृसिंहप्रसादतः ॥

—"I know the true teaching of the Scriptures, and so does Suka. Vyāsa may or may not know. But Sridhara knows everything through the grace of the Lord Nrisimha." After that the orthodox section withdrew their objections.

Sridhara's commentary on the Gitā, though well known in Sanskrit, is not available in English. We have therefore translated it to make it accessible to the English-knowing public. We have followed

the text of the Ānanda Āshrama edition, except in a few places, where the text of other editions, adopted from various recensions, has been found more satisfactory. The words of the translation of the Gītā text have been italicised in the commentary.

*Sri Ramakrishna Math* }  
*Belurmath P.O.* }  
*December 22, 1948.* }

S.V.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bhāg ..	..	Srimad Bhāgavata.
Brih. ..	..	Brihadāranyaka Upanishad.
B.S. ..	..	Brahma-Sutras.
Chh. ..	..	Chhāndogya Upanishad.
Ish. ..	..	Isha Upanishad.
Kath. ..	..	Katha Upanishad.
Kau. ..	..	Kaushitaki Upanishad.
Mah. Nar.	..	Mahānārāyana Upanishad.
Manu.	..	Manu Samhitā.
Nri. Pur.	..	Nrisimha Purvatāpaniya Upanishad.
R.V. ..	..	Rig Veda.
Sar. Dar. Sang.	..	Sarva Darshana Sangraha.
Svet. ..	..	Svetāswatara Upanishad.
Taitt ..	..	Taittiriya Upanishad.
Taitt. Sam.	..	Taittiriya Samhitā.



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## THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ: ITS SYNTHETIC CHARACTER

**T**HE *Bhagavad-Gītā* is now a most, if not the most, popular Hindu scripture. It is regarded as one of the three main scriptures—the *prasthāna-trayas*, as they are called, the other two being the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma-Sūtras*. There is no other scripture which has been so frequently commented upon, for it has been a perennial source of spiritual inspiration, and rightly so, for in it we find different systems of philosophy, ethics, and religion, suited for different temperaments. This universality of the *Gītā* has, however, puzzled some scholars. In this variety of ideals they find contradictions ; for instance, between monism and dualism, knowledge, action, and devotion, Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, and even between Personal God and Impersonal God. These themes, they think, are pieced together without much attempt at reconciliation. To explain these contradictions, they assume that there have been interpolations in the *Gītā*, which must have undergone revision like other parts of the *Mahābhārata*, of which it forms a part.<sup>1</sup> However plausible these theories may look, we think these critics have missed the master-key which alone would have helped them to open this 'jewel-casket' of Indian culture, viz., the spirit of synthesis.

<sup>1</sup> Winternitz, *HIL*, I. p. 435.

The Indo-Aryans were never dominated by rigidity of thought at any time in any sphere of their national life. This freedom of thought helped them to evolve a synthetic outlook, a spirit of seeing unity behind variety. This synthetic outlook is predominantly noticeable in the field of religion. One of the Vedic seers taught their followers, 'That which exists is One, sages call it by various names'.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of this great truth has shaped the history of civilization in this country, and sages have reiterated it at different periods in our history, with the result that it has gone deep into the subconscious mind of the nation. The Hindus have therefore accepted different religions, systems of philosophy, and spiritual cultures as being suited to different temperaments, and as supplementing one another. In keeping with this spirit is the message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. He was a great harmonizer of ideals and institutions, and hence he did not reject any of the ideals extant at the time, but gave a proper place to each one of them, inasmuch as they were suited to the spiritual progress of particular people. If man is to progress spiritually, he must have religious ideals suited to him. Forcing him to follow ideals for which he is not fit will only result in harm and spiritual death. Therefore 'the wise man should not unsettle the faith of the ignorant'.<sup>3</sup> 'By whatsoever way men worship Me, even so do I accept them; (for) in all ways, O Pārtha, men walk in My path'.<sup>4</sup> Guided by this spirit, the *Gītā* has beautifully harmonized the various ideals prevalent at the time.

### SYNTHESIS OF ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* has not much esteem for the reward-seeking religion of Vedic sacrifices. It criticizes<sup>5</sup> the view of the Mimamsakas, who think that ritualism is the whole of

<sup>2</sup> R. V., I. 164-46 ; also X. 115.5

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>3</sup> B. G., III. 26, 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 42-46.



religion and is capable of leading man to *mukti* (liberation). According to the *Gītā*, sacrifices are merely a means to power and enjoyment and they cause rebirth ; by means of them people no doubt get the result coveted, viz. heaven, where they enjoy the pleasures of the gods ; but when their merit is exhausted they have to return to this mundane world. Thus, following the injunctions of the Vedas, seeking pleasure and enjoyment, they come and go. The votaries of the various gods go to the gods. It is only the devotees of the supreme Lord that go to Him and attain liberation. Even those who worship the gods as such, in reality worship the one supreme God ; yet, as they are not conscious of the fact that these gods are but forms of the one God, who is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices, they return to the mortal world.<sup>6</sup> But if they are conscious of the fact that they are worshipping the one God through the different deities, then these very sacrifices will lead them to liberation. Thus, in keeping with the Upaniṣadic teachings, the *Gītā* declares that it is knowledge alone that leads to liberation, and not mere ritualistic observance. Hence the exhortation to Arjuna to go beyond the *gunas*, i.e., the world which is the sphere of rituals.<sup>7</sup>

The *Gītā*, however, realizes that for those who are full of desires and want enjoyment, these sacrifices are useful ; for such people must have some enjoyment, and have their desires fulfilled to a certain extent, before they can tread the path of desirelessness, which is the goal of spiritual life. It is desire that covers knowledge and it has therefore to be destroyed by controlling its seats—the senses, the mind and the intellect.<sup>8</sup> But this highest ideal cannot be followed by all. Ideals have to vary according to the capacity of the aspirants, so that they may be

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 20-25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 45.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 30-41.

followed with faith ; for that is a surer way to progress than aspiring after a higher ideal prematurely. Confusion of ideals is detrimental to individual and social welfare. By performing works prescribed by scriptures, though with desire at first, one gradually progresses and finally attains the state of desirelessness. But works prohibited by the scriptures are never helpful, and so one should abide by the scriptural ordinances and not be prompted by inordinate desires prohibited by them.<sup>9</sup> Even in enjoyment there should be some discrimination. Otherwise it would bring us down to the level of the brute.

It looks like a paradox to say that sacrifices performed with desire will lead to desirelessness or absolute unselfishness. But then, in all sacrifices, though performed with desire, the performer offers something which he possesses to his chosen deity, who, thus propitiated, bestows on his devotee the desired fruit. Thus man learns to renounce and to be unselfish even through these selfish sacrifices, and gradually, as he progresses, he finds that he is in duty bound to offer to the gods the gifts that are bestowed on him by them, and that not to do so is sinful. Selfishness slowly recedes to the background, and duty becomes the guiding principle of these sacrifices. The *Gītā* stresses this idea of obligatoriness on the part of the ordinary man to perform sacrifices.<sup>10</sup>

Having stressed the duty aspect in sacrifices, the *Gītā* next amplifies the narrow and restricted meaning of the words 'duty' (*dharma*) and 'sacrifice' (*yajna*) that was current at the time. According to the *Gītā*, duty is not merely ritualistic acts prescribed by the Vedas, but it includes whatever we are obliged to do by birth and status in society.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, there can be no definition of duty which will be universally binding on all men

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI. 23-24.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 10-16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 31, 33 ; XVIII. 41-44.

and under all circumstances. It would necessarily vary with persons, and, with the change of circumstances, even for the same person. The only criterion to fix it is to see whether a particular act takes a person Godward or not. If it does, then it is his duty (*dharma*) ; otherwise it is a sin (*adharma*) for him. Duties are fixed for us by the inner law of our being, by the *samskaras*, or tendencies acquired by us in previous births, with which we are born ; and working them out is the only way to proceed Godward. Consequently, there is no unchartered freedom in the choice of our duties, nor can the duty of one be the duty of another endowed differently. Doing duties thus determined by his nature, a man incurs no sin. Though they may be defective, he should not relinquish them ; for, after all, any undertaking is attended with evil of some sort or other. Performance of one's duties is the only way to salvation.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, sacrifice does not mean merely ritualistic worship performed by offering material things in the fire, but it includes all kinds of spiritual culture. Thus, acts of charity, giving up of desires, control of the senses and of the breath, muttering of mystic syllables and God's names, are all conceived as sacrifices.<sup>13</sup> In fact, according to the *Gītā*, sacrifice includes all acts whatsoever, done unselfishly ; for the main idea in a sacrifice is the offering of something in the fire to the deity. So any act done without selfishness can be regarded as an offering, and therefore all such acts are sacrifice. With this changed meaning of the word 'sacrifice', the statement of the Mimamsakas, 'This world' is bound by action other than that done for a sacrifice', becomes more significant, for knowledge-sacrifice is superior to material sacrifices.<sup>14</sup> That is why Sri Kṛṣṇa repeats this statement<sup>15</sup> and asks Arjuna to perform action for the sake of sacrifice alone ; for

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 45-48.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 25-30 ; X. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 9.

by performing work as sacrifice, one's entire action melts away.<sup>16</sup> Sacrifice being understood in this sense, the principle underlying Vedic ritualism is accepted ; but a new meaning has been assigned to it, which makes it universally applicable.

Next Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes Arjuna one step higher and says that even this idea of duty is on a lower plane. For duty generally leaves ample scope for our desires and egoism. Arjuna might have fought the battle with the motive of gaining name, fame and a kingdom. Outwardly everyone would have been satisfied that he had done his duty well ; still it would not have helped him to progress spiritually and attain liberation, as his selfishness would still have been there—the attachment or desire for the result of the work—and it is this attachment that binds. So the only duty we have is to work in a non-attached way and not to get ourselves identified with the work.

How is non-attachment to be attained ? The *Gītā* prescribes two ways to attain it : the way of knowledge for the meditative type of men and the way of selfless action for men of action.<sup>17</sup> Śrī Kṛṣṇa is aware of the fight between the adherents of knowledge and the adherents of action, viz., the Kapila Sāṃkhyas and Vedantins ranged against the Mimamsakas. The latter insist that work should be performed, while the former declare that all work should be given up as evil.<sup>18</sup> The adherents of knowledge say that action belongs to the sphere of ignorance, and that all actions are overlaid with defects as fire by smoke ; so it is futile to strive for liberation through action. The way to freedom lies in preventing the mind and the senses from going outward, which is their nature to do, and turning them inward on the Self.<sup>19</sup> But work distracts and externalizes our mind and senses ; so all work should be renounced. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however prescribes a middle path. He

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 23.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ka. U.*, IV. 1.



says that work should not be given up, but should be performed without attachment and desire for their fruit.<sup>20</sup> Renunciation and performance of action both lead to liberation, for they are not different, but one. Of the two, however, performance is superior, because it is easier and therefore suited for the vast majority, while renunciation of action is difficult to attain.<sup>21</sup> Only a few extraordinary souls can follow the way of knowledge. The goal is to attain *naiskarmya* (complete inaction), and it cannot be attained by merely giving up work externally and continuing to think of sense-objects ; for such thinking also is action and capable of binding the soul ; the reason being that attachment and desire, the main causes of bondage, still linger in the mind. Further it is not possible for the embodied being to give up work completely.<sup>22</sup> So that is not the way Sri Kṛṣṇa prescribes for Arjuna. He asks him to perform his duties as a soldier, absorbed in *yoga*,<sup>23</sup> for that is the secret of work.<sup>24</sup> *Yoga* is equanimity, indifference to success and failure,<sup>25</sup> and one attains it when one's mind is free from desire for enjoyment and is firmly established in the Self.<sup>26</sup> Arjuna is therefore asked to fight with his mind established in the Self, and not to identify himself with his actions, for they are in reality done by the *gunas* of Prakṛti (Nature's constituents), and it is only through delusion that a man identifies himself with them.<sup>27</sup> He is asked to transcend the *gunas* and hold himself aloof as a witness of the doings of Prakṛti, and not to be attached to them.<sup>28</sup> When one works with this attitude of mind, there is no consciousness of being a 'doer', and one gets non-attached.<sup>29</sup> Work then loses its binding effect and becomes equal to no-work. If a man sees inaction in action,<sup>30</sup> then even in the midst of

<sup>20</sup> B.G., XVIII. 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 4-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 50.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 53.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 28.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 2-6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 48.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 48.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 29.

intense activity he experiences the eternal calmness of the soul, which is not ruffled, come what may. He is not affected by good and evil, happiness and misery, and in all conditions he remains the same, he becomes a *sthitaprajna*, a man of steady wisdom. The *Gītā* describes at some length<sup>31</sup> the nature of such a man who has perfected himself by the practice of selfless action. This is the Brāhmic state, or having one's being in Brahman ; and, attaining it, one is no longer deluded, but gets merged in Brahman.<sup>32</sup> The *Gītā* thus asks us to perform our duties disinterestedly, combining the subjective attitude of the man of knowledge with outward action, that is to say, having an attitude of mind towards the performance of duties which is similar to that of a man of self-realization with respect to the normal functions of the body like seeing, hearing, smelling, eating and sleeping (i.e., being free from the idea of agency). Knowledge and action are harmonized thereby, and the statement<sup>33</sup> that knowledge (*sāṃkhya*) and action (*yoga*) are not different, but one, is justified by this explanation. The result attained is also identical, for that which is gained by knowledge, viz., everlasting peace,<sup>34</sup> is also attained by the man of selfless action.<sup>35</sup> Ritualism as the highest ideal is condemned, but as a stepping-stone to absolute unselfishness, it is worthy to be followed by persons who have desires.

### ACTION AND DEVOTION

From the description of selfless action ( Karma-yoga ) given above, we may infer that it is not always necessary for a votary of it to have faith in God. But if he believes in a personal God, there is an easier method for him to attain non-attachment ; by

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., II. 55-71.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., V. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., V. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., II. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., V. 29

looking upon work as worship of the Lord, and by offering to Him its fruit, he makes his path smooth. Thus there is a much easier path suited to those who possess some faith and devotion. Worshipping Him through one's own duties,<sup>36</sup> by performing work for the Lord,<sup>37</sup> and by dedicating it to Him,<sup>38</sup> one attains liberation. From Him proceeds the activity of all beings.<sup>39</sup> He is the ultimate source of all power and as such He is the agent ; we are but tools in His hand, mere machines. As He directs us, so we do. He is the inner Ruler directing all ; failing to see this, we think that we are doing all actions and get ourselves bound. Through devotion man ultimately realizes this fact, surrenders himself to the Lord, works out His will and thus becomes absolutely unattached. There is no more compulsion to perform duties ; nay, there is no idea even of duty, and the devotee does what is expected of him spontaneously, out of love for God. Arjuna realized all this with the vision of the Lord's cosmic form. He got rid of his delusion, regained memory of his true nature, and surrendered himself to the Lord, saying, 'I will carry out your behest'.<sup>40</sup> Here we have a beautiful synthesis of action and devotion, and that in an inseparable manner.

### KAPILA SĀMKHYA AND THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* gives great prominence to the Sāṃkhya system and accepts all that is valuable in it. The Sāṃkhya philosophers say : Prakṛti is the primordial non-differentiated material substance made up of three constituents—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The differentiated universe evolves out of the mingling of these constituents (*gunas*) in various ways at the beginning of a cycle, and it is merged again in this undifferentiated Prakṛti at the

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 46.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 10.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 73

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, XII. 10.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 46.

end of a cycle. This cyclic process goes on eternally. Prakṛti is unmanifest ( *avyakta* ), not perceptible to the senses, while all objects evolved out of it are manifest ( *vyakta* ) to the senses or the mind. Prakṛti is changefully eternal, while its products are mutable, in the sense that their perceptible form is destroyed in the evolutionary process. Beyond this Prakṛti, separate from it, and of a different nature, is the Puruṣa (soul). While Prakṛti is material and insentient, Puruṣa is sentient and immaterial. Unlike Prakṛti, he is changeless. Prakṛti produces the body and the senses and is responsible for all activity, but the Puruṣa is not a doer. He is indifferent, a mere witness of Nature's activities. Through ignorance, however, the Puruṣa gets identified with Nature and thus experiences pleasure and pain. This union of the Puruṣa and Prakṛti is responsible for this mundane existence. The bondage of the Puruṣa is apparent and not real, and when he realizes that he is separate from Prakṛti, he gets liberated. All this the *Gītā* accepts,<sup>41</sup> but it disagrees with the Sāṃkhya philosophers when they say that the Puruṣa and Prakṛti are self-existing independent entities, that there are an infinite number of souls, and that there is no God, the creator of the universe. The *Gītā* works out a further synthesis and says that this whole universe is one. It enunciates a third principle : Puruṣottama (the highest Being) or Ívara (God),<sup>42</sup> Who is beyond both matter and spirit, and Who is the very basis of this universe. This one Being manifests Himself as this universe, both sentient and insentient. He is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. Thus Prakṛti and Puruṣa are dependent on God. Prakṛti with its twenty-four categories is lower nature<sup>43</sup> while the soul, which is a part of Him,<sup>44</sup> is His higher nature.<sup>45</sup> As the soul animates the individual body, so God animates the whole universe. There is

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 18-19 ; XIII. 19-23, 26, 28    <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, XV. 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 4-5.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, XV. 7.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 5.



nothing higher than God. All this visible universe is strung on Him like gems on a string.<sup>46</sup> Presiding over His Prakṛti, He projects the entire aggregate of beings.<sup>47</sup> Prakṛti is the mother of the universe, and He is the father.<sup>48</sup> Resorting to His Prakṛti He takes birth, or manifests Himself.<sup>49</sup> Thus Prakṛti is not an independent entity, but belongs to Him. Though the *Gītā* accepts the multiplicity of individual souls, which are but parts of God, whether real or apparent, it declares that there is only one (supreme) Puruṣa, Who is not only the onlooker, the approver, and supporter of the activity of Prakṛti, but also the great Lord of Prakṛti.<sup>50</sup> Thus Prakṛti is not an independent entity, but subservient to Him, and it is He Who, through Prakṛti, is the cause of creation, and not Prakṛti independently. This supreme Being is the one Reality to be known, and knowing Him truly one enters into Him.<sup>51</sup> Liberation is therefore not merely discrimination between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, but also union with God. Thus a new synthesis between the dualism of the Sāṃkhya and the monism of the Upanisads is established.

### GOD, PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

We find in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* various descriptions of the ultimate Reality. He is described as having no form or attribute, as having attributes but formless, and again as having both form and attributes—which shows that He is both impersonal and personal and yet beyond both, for we cannot limit Him and say He is this much, since the Infinite can never be an object of finite knowledge. In this impersonal aspect He is Brahman, the highest imperishable principle,<sup>52</sup> the unmanifest beyond the other manifest, viz., Prakṛti.<sup>53</sup> This unmanifest,

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 22.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII. 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 8, 10.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 55.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII. 18, 20.

imperishable Brahman is the supreme goal, attaining which one does not return.<sup>54</sup> This Brahman is neither being nor non-being. Being beyond the range of the senses, It has no phenomenal existence. It is not non-being either, for It makes Itself felt through the functions of the various senses as the driving force behind them. It is bereft of all sense-organs, for otherwise It would be limited like ordinary beings ; therefore the attribution of sense-organs<sup>55</sup> to It is only figurative and not real. It is unattached, yet sustains everything as its substratum, being existence itself. It is without attributes, yet the energizer of all attributes. It is far and yet near, as our very soul. It is undivided in beings, yet remains as if divided. All these apparent contradictions<sup>56</sup> are resolved, if we remember that Brahman is both transcendent and immanent. Brahman has become this universe and yet transcends it. When the transcendent Brahman appears as this universe, It becomes subject, as it were, to certain limitations which do not really belong to It, but to the phenomenal world ; hence this paradoxical description through affirmation and negation. It is the Light of lights and beyond darkness or ignorance.<sup>57</sup> The sun does not illuminate It, nor the moon, nor the fire.<sup>58</sup> This Brahman is the one Reality to be known in order to attain immortality.<sup>59</sup> To those whose ignorance is destroyed, their knowledge manifests It.<sup>60</sup> In this description of the Impersonal, we have an echo of the Upanisads.

Though the *Gītā* accepts this impersonal aspect of the Godhead, yet it is predominantly theistic in its teachings. It is a peculiarity of the *Gītā* that it always lays stress on the ideal which is suited to the vast majority of mankind, as against any

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII. 21.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 12-16.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, XV. 6.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 13.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 17.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 12.

other, however perfect, which may be suited only for the exceptional few. So in the *Gītā* the personal God is given more prominence than the impersonal. 'Personal' does not mean merely 'having form', it means also the formless aspect with attributes, the *Íśvara*, as He is called in the *Gītā*. The term 'personality' refers to a self-conscious being capable of knowing, feeling, willing, loving and satisfying man's longing for a personal relationship. All human qualities are attributed to the Divine Personality, but they are free from all human limitations. Thus, He not only knows, but He is omniscient. The Impersonal is beyond thought ; so when the mind tries to conceive It, it naturally super-imposes some of its own limitations on It, and we have the personal God, the *Íśvara*. That is the highest reading of the Impersonal by the finite mind of man. So long as we are limited beings, we have this triple entry—soul, nature and God. It is the Impersonal that appears as all these. But when we attain the superconscious state, where the 'I' ceases to exist, all these three entities vanish, and God is no longer personal. He is experienced as pure Consciousness. Thus, these two—the impersonal and the personal, the absolute and the relative—are but two aspects of the same Godhead. The absolute implies the relative, and *vice versa*. They are not two separate entities, even as fire and its burning capacity are not different, and we cannot think of the one without the other. When we think of God as inactive He is impersonal, and when He is active He is called *Íśvara*, the personal God, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe, the father, mother, friend, Lord, supporter, abode, refuge and goal.<sup>61</sup> This universe is pervaded by Him in His unmanifest form.<sup>62</sup> He exists supporting the whole

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 17-18.<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 4.

universe with a portion of Himself.<sup>63</sup> Thus He is both immanent and transcendent. He is seated in the heart of all beings, controlling them from within.<sup>64</sup> There is nothing higher than He.<sup>65</sup> Just as He supports this whole universe as its cause, even so He supports the differentiated things as their very essence. He is thus the moisture in water, lustre in the sun and the moon, and heat in the fire, sound in ether, odour in earth, etc. All beings are in Him, but He is not in them ; nor are the beings really in Him. That is His divine mystery.<sup>66</sup> This mystery of *māyā* veils Him from ordinary mortals, but those who surrender themselves to Him surmount this *māyā*. Those who take refuge in Him and strive for liberation know that supreme Brahman, the Impersonal, through the grace of the Lord.<sup>67</sup> Again, this universe of sentient and insentient beings is the manifest form of the formless *Ívara*, for He has become all this. It is His universal form which was shown to Arjuna, and which only the fortunate few have been able to see through undivided devotion.<sup>68</sup> This universe being a manifest form of the Lord, He is immanent in all things, and as such they are symbols of God. In certain things, however, the manifestation of His power is greater, which makes them far superior to other objects of that class. Such extraordinary things are mentioned in chapter ten as *pratīkas* or symbols for meditating on God. From such statements we easily understand that this immanence can be manifest in an extraordinary degree in a human form, which gives us an Incarnation of God. There is no difference between God as unmanifest and God as manifest in such a human form. He takes such human forms and incarnates Himself in this world at critical periods in its history, to destroy the wicked and establish

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, X. 42.<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 61.<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 7.<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 4-5.<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 14, 25, 29 ; X. 10-11.<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, XI. 54.

righteousness.<sup>69</sup> It is very difficult to recognize God when He incarnates Himself in human form, for He behaves so like ordinary mortals that people are deluded into thinking that He is just one of them. 'The ignorant deride Me who have taken a human form, not knowing My higher nature as the great Lord of beings.'<sup>70</sup> It is only a few great souls that recognize God when He appears in human form, but the vast majority take Him for an ordinary mortal born subject to his own past *karma*.<sup>71</sup> He who truly knows the divine birth and work of an Incarnation attains liberation after death.<sup>72</sup>

### KNOWLEDGE AND DEVOTION

In many places in the *Gītā* devotion to both the Impersonal and the Personal aspects of God has been prescribed for attaining liberation. In stanzas 2-8 of chapter three, corresponding to these two aspects, two paths, namely, the way of knowledge and the way of devotion, are clearly stated ; but a higher place is given to devotion, for the usual reason that it is the easier of the two and, therefore, suited to the generality of mankind, while the path of knowledge is difficult and suited only to a very few of exceptional spiritual calibre. In this path of knowledge the aspirant has to realize that the world is illusory and Brahman alone is real. He has to get a firm conviction through reasoning that Brahman is not this universe, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor the senses, neither happiness nor misery, and so on, till by this process he finally comes to the core of things and realizes the Absolute. Merely an intellectual grasp of the illusory nature of the world will not help him ; He has to be established in this knowledge even in the midst of the worst possible calamities. For ordinary mortals, to whom

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 6-8

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 24.25.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 11

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 9.



this world of the senses is real, it is very difficult indeed to be established in this knowledge. Hence the Lord dissuades Arjuna from this path and prescribes for him the easier path of devotion to His personal aspect. In this path a man has not to give up his passions, feelings, etc., but has to switch them on to God. Instead of having worldly things for their objects, they are directed solely to God. He merely disconnects them from the worldly objects and connects them with God, and if this is done successfully, he attains liberation. The chief motive in both the ideals is to get rid of this little 'I' by merging it either in the infinite 'I', the Self, or in the infinite 'Thou', that is, God. The net result is the same—attainment of freedom. 'One worships saying, "I am Thyself", while another saying, "I am Thine" ; though there is a slight difference between the two, the ultimate result is the same.'<sup>73</sup> The difference is only in language, but the content of the spiritual practices is the same, namely, the elimination of 'I' and 'mine', which are bondages of the soul. The devotee gets rid of them by constant remembrance of and service to God, and in the highest state of devotion he forgets himself entirely and sees his Beloved everywhere and in everything, even as the man of knowledge, comes to the final conclusion, 'All this indeed is Vāsudeva (the Lord)'.<sup>74</sup> Again, 'By devotion he knows Me truly, how much and what I am';<sup>75</sup> that is, he realizes the Lord's impersonal aspect as pure Consciousness. Further, a devotee, through unswerving devotion to the Lord, transcends the *gunas* and becomes fit for merging in Brahman.<sup>76</sup> In like manner, unswerving devotion is prescribed as a means to knowledge ;<sup>77</sup> and conversely, when a man realizes Brahman,

<sup>73</sup> *Tavāsmīti bhajaty ekah tvam evāsmīti cāparah*

*Iti kincid viśeṣepi pariñāmaḥ samo dvayoḥ*—Narahari, *Bodhasara*, 32. 23.

<sup>74</sup> *B.G.*, VII. 19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 55.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV. 26.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 10.

the impersonal aspect of God, he gets devotion to His personal aspect also.<sup>78</sup> Thus knowledge and devotion get merged in each other.

### SYNTHESIS OF THE FOUR YOGAS

Commentators on the *Gītā* often give prominence to one of these four paths taught in the book, viz., action, knowledge, devotion and meditation, and relegate the others to a secondary position, as preparatory disciplines to the one which, they think, is the true way to God-realization. Such a thing, however is not justified by the *Gītā*, with its synthetic outlook. According to it, each of these paths is equally efficacious and capable of leading the soul to freedom. 'Some see the Self in the body by the mind through meditation, others by the path of knowledge, and some others by the path of selfless action.'<sup>79</sup> That this interpretation is correct, is further borne out by the descriptions given in the *Gītā* of men who have attained perfection in each of these paths.<sup>80</sup> These texts show that the various aspirants reach the same state, for similar qualities are manifest in their character. In fact, the *Gītā* clearly states that they all reach the Brāhmic state or become one with Brahman—*Brahmabhūta*.<sup>81</sup>

The *Gītā*, though it recognizes the efficacy of each of these paths to lead the soul to freedom, yet recommends an harmonious combination of all four paths. The predominant one gives the name to that particular path, while the other three are combined with it as feeders to strengthen the main spiritual current. Thus, we find the path of selfless action combined in the first place with knowledge ; for the aspirant has to perform work externally, having the subjective attitude

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 54.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII. 24.

<sup>80</sup> For action see *Ibid.*, II. 55-72 ; for meditation, VI. 7-10, 27-32 ; for devotion, XII. 13-20 ; for knowledge, XIII. 7-12, XIV. 23-25, and XVIII. 50-53.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 72, VI. 27, XIV. 26, and XVIII. 53-54.

of the Sāmkhya internally. He is to work, established in *yoga*, with an even mind, and this equanimity is not possible till one's mind is free from the distractions of the senses and desires. The senses have to be controlled, if one is to practise selfless action efficiently, and this can be attained not by merely abstaining from sense-objects, but by meditation on the Lord.<sup>82</sup> Thus with action are combined knowledge, meditation and devotion. Similarly, devotion, in its paths, is combined with the other three. The aspirant is to have a knowledge of the nature of Ívara and His glories, for devotion is possible only after that. Then the aspirant is asked to offer all his actions to the Lord,<sup>83</sup> and also to worship Him through the performance of his duties. His devotion has also to be constant and unswerving ; it must be a continuous remembrance of the Lord, which is meditation. So with devotion are combined knowledge, action and meditation. Again, in the path of knowledge, discrimination between the Self and the not-Self is the main aim. One has to discriminate and give up the idea that matter is real. The Self alone is real, and all else is illusory. Constantly remembering our true nature is the way to separate the Self from the not-Self. Work also has to be performed and should not be given up, but it should be done without desire for results ; for work is purifying and helpful to us to rise from *tamas* to *rajas* and hence to *sattva*, and finally to transcend the *gunas* and become *gunāṭīta*, when full knowledge dawns. Unswerving devotion to the Lord is a means to this attainment of knowledge, and has therefore to be adopted. Thus with knowledge are combined meditation, action and devotion, though knowledge is the main note in this symphony. So the *Gītā* views spiritual life as an organic

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 61.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 27.

whole, and recommends a harmonious blending of the four *yogas*, which would result in an all-round development of the human personality.

### SOCIAL SYNTHESIS

One of the great tasks that Śrī Kṛṣṇa sets himself to was to weld the different races and civilizations in India in his time into an integral society of an all-India character, so that peace and harmony could reign in the land. To bring about this social synthesis, he first held out to them a common ideal. He taught that union with God was the supreme end of life, and that this worldly life was all vanity. 'Having attained this transient joyless world (i.e., human birth), worship Me<sup>64</sup>—that was his behest to Arjuna and through him to all the warring nations of the time. He based the whole social structure on this solid foundation, viz., that the supreme reality and the only thing of value was God. All life, according to him, had a meaning in so far as it culminated in a union with God. This became the dominant note of the whole social fabric round which Indian society was sought to be organized. The different racial and ethnic groups in the country, Āryan and non-Āryan, with their different traits, were stamped with this fundamental principle of Āryan life ; and this helped to integrate them into one society with a common ideal, which became the bond of unity among them. As a corollary to this main principle, he also preached the harmony of religious ideals, showing thereby that various religious ideals were equally efficacious to lead man to the ultimate goal. In his delineation of the four *yogas*, he enunciated the fundamentals of spiritual life, and thereby made it possible for the Āryan faith to

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, IX. 33.



assimilate the alien cultures and religions within its fold. This also helped to bring about a unity amidst diversity, all these ideals being synthesized as parts or facets of an integral whole. Again, God according to the *Gītā*, as we have already seen, is both transcendent and immanent. So in striving to attain union with God, the aspirant is filled with love for His immanent aspect also, and his love, therefore, embraces the whole humanity. He is ever engaged in the good of all creatures,<sup>85</sup> and he judges of pleasure and pain of all creatures by the same standard as he applies to himself.<sup>86</sup> The same God exists equally in all beings, and the aspirant realizing this truth does not injure anybody in any way and thus goes to the Supreme.<sup>87</sup> He breaks through the superficial differences between man and man—racial or other—and reaches his inner essence which is God. The vision was thus directed towards the unity at the back of the inevitable differences between man and man, and in that unity all these differences were eliminated.

A great barrier, however, in the way of attaining this social synthesis was the hereditary caste prevalent at the time among the Āryans, which kept non-Āryan races outside Āryan society. Śrī Kṛṣṇa introduced social liberalism within the Āryan society by changing the basis of this division of society, and made it possible to assimilate non-Āryans to the Āryan social fold. He did not reject the fourfold division of society, but accepted it as God-ordained,<sup>88</sup> for the destruction of caste would have led to the ruin of the social organization. Any society that is strong and progressive, necessarily welcomes variety into its structure ; for when variations cease to be produced, death results. So Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the fourfold

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 25 ; XII. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, XII. 27-28.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, VI. 32.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 13.

division of society, based it on the qualities of individuals and on their fitness to live a particular mode of life suitable to serve society in a particular way. The division was functional, and each individual was expected to do that kind of service to society for which he was best equipped according to his *guna* and *karma*, or his moral, spiritual and intellectual endowments as determined by his previous births and actions.<sup>89</sup> It was a question of service, and not that of rights or privileges which are the bane of all societies. This put the right man in the right place, and there was no waste of energy nor want of efficiency, which would otherwise have resulted from an indiscriminate division of labour. This fourfold division of labour removed competition between individuals in society. The performance of one's duties, if done as worship of the Lord, opened the gates of liberation, which was the goal of life according to the *Gītā*.<sup>90</sup> Spiritual progress depended not on the nature of the work performed, but on the attitude of the mind, and the efficiency with which it was performed. The way to freedom was open to all irrespective of the caste to which they belonged, and so far as the attainment of their goal in life was concerned, all were equal and had equal opportunities. The ritualistic Vedic religion was the monopoly of the two higher castes, the Brāhmanas and the Ksatriyas; the Vaiśyas and Sūdras, and even the Brāhmana women, had no access to it, since they lacked the necessary classical study for taking part in it. The simple religion of faith and devotion to the Lord threw open the gates of liberation to every one, and put all, irrespective of their caste, sex and learning, on an equal footing.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 13 ; VIII. 41.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 46.

Incarnations come not to destroy, but to fulfil, and this statement is particularly true of Sri Kṛṣṇa. He did not break off from accepted traditions, though he completely changed their significance and bearing. He interpreted old ideals in a new light to make them suitable to the conditions of life in society and to give it a further push towards progress and perfection. Conflicts between ideals were resolved in a new synthesis which made life smooth both for the individual and society as a whole. This is the fundamental note in the message of the *Gītā*—the spirit of harmony, the finding of unity in diversity ; and from this point of view all apparent contradictions in it are resolved.

SRIMAD  
BHAGAVAD-GITA

SRIMAD  
BHAGAVAD-GITA





**CHAPTER I**  
**THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA**

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच ।

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

Dhritarāshtra said:

1. Gathered on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, O Sanjaya, what did my sons and the sons of Pāndu, eager to fight, do?

**Sridhara's Commentary**

(1) I bow down to the wonderful Mādhava (Sri Krishna), the embodiment of supreme Bliss, who with one mouth expressed what had been taught with dexterity by Sesha through innumerable mouths.

(2) After respectfully bowing down to Vishnu and Shiva, the Lord of the universe, and being guided by devotion to them, I am writing this commentary called Subodhini on the Gita.

(3) After scrutinizing according to my lights the views of the commentator (Saṅkara), and likewise the

words of his expounders, I am beginning this commentary on the Gītā.

(4) This gloss called Subodhini, a mere intelligent reading of which elucidates the meaning of the Gītā, should always be meditated upon by the wise.

The extremely gracious Lord, Sri Krishna, the son of Devaki, incarnated Himself in this world for the good of humanity, when His feet were worshipped by all. He rescued Arjuna, who was intent on giving up his own duties (viz., those of a Kshatriya) and taking to those of another (viz., of a Brāhmaṇa), owing to his discrimination being overpowered by grief and infatuation, resulting from ignorance of the Truth, from that ocean of grief and infatuation, with the boat consisting of teachings on esoteric wisdom relating to duties. That very subject-matter taught by the Lord, Krishna-Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa) has treated in seven hundred verses. Therein he has written down mostly the very verses uttered by Sri Krishna, composing (only) a few verses of his own to bring out the connection. As has been stated in the *Greatness of the Gītā*: “That Gītā which issued from the lotus-like lips of Padmanābha (Sri Krishna) Himself, must be well assimilated; what is the use of a multiplicity of other Scriptures?”

Here, the passage beginning with, “Gathered on the holy plain” etc., and ending with, “Spoke these words in grief” (I. 27), is put in a narrative form in order to introduce the dialogue between Sri Krishna

and Arjuna. After that till the end (we have) their dialogue bearing on the knowledge of duty. Now, when Dhritarāshtra asked his charioteer, Sanjaya, who was by his side in Hastināpura, as to what happened at Kurukshetra in the verse, "O Sanjaya, what did my sons" etc., Sanjaya, who had received divine sight through the grace of Vyāsa, related though residing in Hastināpura, to Dhritarāshtra the events of Kurukshetra as if he directly saw them, in the words: "Having seen the army of the sons of Pāndu" etc.

*Gathered etc., O Sanjaya, gathered or assembled, on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, what did my sons and the sons of Pāndu, eager to fight, intent on fighting, do?*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

Sanjaya said:

2. Having seen the army of the sons of Pāndu arrayed, King Duryodhana then approached the preceptor (Drona), and spoke (these) words:

*Having seen etc. Having seen the army or forces, of the sons of Pāndu arrayed, situated in battle-array, King*



*Duryodhana approaching the preceptor Drona spoke the following words :*

पश्येतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।

व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

3. "Behold, O preceptor, this vast army of the Pāṇdavas arrayed by the son of Drupada, your gifted disciple.

Those very words are being stated in the nine verses beginning with: *Behold* etc. *Behold, O preceptor, this vast army of the Pāṇdavas* consisting of seven Akshauhini,<sup>1</sup> *arrayed, disposed in battle-array, by Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Drupada.*

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।

युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥

4. "Here are mighty-bowed heroes, equals of Bhima and Arjuna in battle—Yuyudhāna (Sātyaki), and Virāta and Drupada, the mighty warrior.

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<sup>1</sup> An Akshauhini consists of 21,870 chariots, as many elephants, three times as many cavalry and five times as many infantry. The total strength of the two armies was eighteen Akshauhini or about four million men in all.

वृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।

पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥

5. "Dhrishtaketu, Chekitāna, the valiant king of Kāsi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and that prince amongst men, the king of the Shibis.

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।

सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

6. "Yudhāmanyu the powerful, Uttamaujas the valiant, the son of Subhadrā, and the sons of Draupadi—all mighty warriors (Māharathāh).

*Here are etc. Here, in this army. Those (instruments) by which arrows (Ishu) are discharged (As) are called Ishvāsas, i.e., bows; those who wield mighty bows are the mighty-bowed. Bhīma and Arjuna are two exceptionally famous warriors. There are (other) heroes equal to them (in the army). These are being mentioned by name: Yuyudhāna, i.e., Sātyaki (4). Further, Dhrishtaketu etc. A king named Chekitāna. The king of the Shibis, a prince, best, amongst men (5). Yudhāmanyu etc. A powerful (warrior) named Yudhāmanyu. The son of Subhadrā, i.e., Abhimanyu. The sons of*

*Draupadi*, i.e., the five sons of *Draupadi*, viz., *Prativindhya* and others born to the five *Pāndava* brothers, *Yudhishtira* etc. Definition of *Mahāratha* etc.: He who is well-versed in the science of weapons, and can fight single-handed ten thousand archers, is considered to be a *Mahāratha*; he who can fight single-handed innumerable<sup>1</sup> archers is called an *Atiratha*; he who can fight only one archer is called a *Rathin*; and he who is less powerful than (even) that is regarded as half-a-*Rathin* (6).

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।

नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७ ॥

7. "Know also, O best amongst the twice-born (*Brāhmanas*), those who are distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army. I shall name them for your information.

*Know also* etc. *Know*, learn; *leaders*, commanders (in our army); *for your information* or full knowledge.

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।

अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८ ॥

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<sup>1</sup>But less than ten thousand.

8. "Yourself, Bhishma, Karna and Kripa, the winner of battles; Asvatthāma, Vikrana and also the son of Somadatta.

These are being named in the two verses beginning with: *Yourself* etc. *Yourself*, i.e., Drona. One who is victorious in battle is called *the winner of battles*. *The son of Somadatta*, Bhurishravas.

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।

नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

9. "And many other heroes as well are there, determined to give up their lives for my sake, wielding various (kinds of) weapons for attack, all dexterous in battle.

*And many others* etc. *Determined to give up their lives for my sake*, for attaining my purpose. Those who wield *various weapons for attack*, as means of attack. *Dexterous*, well-skilled, *in battle*.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

10. "That army of ours, protected by Bhishma, is insufficient; but this army of theirs, protected by Bhima, is sufficient.

What then? To answer this the text says: *That army etc. That army of ours, our army possessing such great heroes and protected by Bhishma as it is, is insufficient, appears to be incapable of fighting with them. But this army of theirs, of the Pāndavas, being protected by Bhima, is sufficient, appears to be capable, Bhishma being interested in both sides, our army seems to be inferior to the Pandava forces; but Bhima being interested in one side only, this army of theirs seems to be superior to our forces.*

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।

भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

11. “(Therefore) do you all, keeping to your respective stations, at all approaches to the army, protect Bhishma alone on all sides”.

Therefore you all ought to be stationed thus. It is being stated: *(Therefore) do you all etc. Keeping to your respective positions, not giving up your respective stations in the field, at all approaches to the army, do you all protect Bhishma alone on all sides, protect him in such a way that, while he is fighting with others, nobody can kill him from behind. We live solely on the strength of Bhishma—this is the idea.*



तस्य सञ्जनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

12. Gladdening his (Duryodhana's) heart, the powerful eldest of the Kurus, the grandsire, thundered forth a lion's roar, and blew his conch.

Hearing these words of high esteem of King Duryodhana, what did Bhishma do? It is being stated: *Gladdening* etc. *Gladdening his*, the King's heart, the grandsire, Bhishma, thundered forth a lion's roar, and blew, sounded, his conch.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।

सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

13. Then, all of a sudden conchs, kettle-drums, trumpets, drums, and horns blared forth; that sound was tumultuous.

Then, seeing commander Bhishma's eagerness to fight, on all sides there was eagerness for battle. To describe it the text says: *Then* etc. *Trumpets, drums, and horns*—different kinds of musical instruments—*blared forth all of a sudden*, were sounded at that very moment. And *that sound* of the conchs etc. *was tumultuous, uproarious*.

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।

माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Then, seated in a great chariot to which white horses were yoked, Mādhava (Sri Krishna) and Pāndava (Arjuna) blew their celestial conchs.

Now the eagerness for battle manifest in the Pāndava army is being related in the five verses beginning with: *Then, seated etc.* *Then*, after that tumultuous noise created by the musical instruments of the Kaurava army, *Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a chariot, blew their celestial conchs forcibly.*

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।

पोण्ड्रं दध्मो महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Hrishikesa (Krishna) blew the (conch) Pāñchajanya, Dhānanjaya (Arjuna) the Devadatta, and Vrikodara (Bhima) of terrible deeds blew the great conch Paundra.

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

16. King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya and Nakula

and Sahadeva, the Sughosha and Manipushpaka respectively.

Now it is being shown who blew which: *Hrishikesa* etc. *Pāñchajanya* etc., are the names of the conchs of Sri Krishna and others. *Of terrible deeds*, one whose deeds were terrible; *Vrikodara*, one who had a voracious stomach like a wolf, *blew the mighty conch Paundra* (15). *King Yudhishtira* etc. *Nakula* blew the conch named *Sughosha*; *Sahadeva*, the conch named *Manipushpaka* (16).

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।

धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।

सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥

17-18. The Mighty-bowed king of Kāsi, the mighty warrior Sikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Virāta, the unconquered Sāyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and Subhadrā's son of powerful arms, (all), O Lord of the earth, blew their respective conchs on all sides.

*The mighty-bowed* etc., *Kāśya*, king of Kāsi. How was he? One whose bow was great, or superior. *Drupada* etc. *O Lord of the earth*, Dhritarāshtra (17-18).

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।  
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

19. That great tumult, making the heaven and earth resound, rent the hearts of Dhritarāshtra's sons.

And the noise of these conchs caused great fear to your (Dhritarāshtra's) sons. This is what the text says: *That great etc. It rent the hearts of Dhritarāshtra's i.e., your, sons. How? Making the heaven and earth resound, i.e., filling them with its reverberations.*

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽञ्जुत ॥ २१ ॥

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

20-22. Then the monkey-bannered son of Pāndu, (Arjuna) when he saw the sons of Dhritarāshtra (thus) arrayed, and

when missiles were about to be discharged; raised his bow, O king, and said to Hrishikesa (Sri Krishna) the following words:

Arjuna said:

O Achyuta, (Sri Krishna) keep my chariot between the two armies while I see those who are arrayed, seeking battle, and know with whom I shall have to fight in this preparation for combat.

At that moment Arjuna spoke to Sri Krishna. This is being related in the four verses beginning with *Then* etc. *Arrayed*, marshalled. *Monkey-bannered*, Arjuna (20). *Said to Hrishikesa* etc. Those very words (of Arjuna) are being given: *O Achyuta* etc. (21). *While I see* etc. 'But then you are a fighter, and not a witness of the fight (so what is the use of keeping the chariot like that?).' In answer to this the text says: *Know with whom* etc. *With whom I shall have to fight* (22).

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

23. (And while) I see those who are gathered here ready for fight, desirous of



pleasing in battle the evil-minded son of Dhritarāshtra.

(*And while*) *I see* etc. Place my chariot between the two armies *while I see those who are gathered here*, desirous of doing what is agreeable to Duryodhana, the son of Dhritarāshtra—this is the construction.

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।

सेनयोद्भयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।

उवाच पार्थ पर्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरुनिति ॥ २५ ॥

Sanjaya said:

24-25. O descendant of Bharata (Dhritarāshtra), thus spoken to by Gudākesa (Arjuna), Hrishikesa (Sri Krishna), placing that excellent chariot between the two armies, in front of Bhishma, Drona, and all the kings, said, "See, O son of Prithā (Arjuna), these assembled Kurus."

What happened after that. To answer this the text says: *Thus spoken to* etc. Being *thus spoken to* by the master of sleep (Gudākesa, i.e., Arjuna who had

controlled sleep.) *O descendant of Bharata, Dhritarāshtra, he (Sri Krishna), placing the chariot in front of Bhishma, Drona, and all the kings said, 'See, O son of Prithā, these Kurus.'*

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृन्थ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ।

श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ॥ २६ ॥

26. There, situated in both the armies, Pārtha (Arjuna) saw fathers, as also grandsires, preceptors, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, associates, fathers-in-law, and well-wishers.

What happened after that? To answer this the text says in a verse and a half; *There* etc. He saw fathers, i.e., uncles; sons and grandsons, that is to say, the sons and grandsons of Duryodhana and others; associates, friends; and well-wishers, those who had done some favour.

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्विन्धून्वस्थितान् ।

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥

27. Seeing all these kinsmen gathered together, the son of Kunti, overcome with great compassion, spoke thus in grief.

What did Arjuna do then? In answer to this the text says: *Seeing* etc. *Overcome*, smitten with or possessed of; *Vishadat* means greatly despondent, or feeling down-hearted.

अर्जुन उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥ २८ ॥

Arjuna said:

28. Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed with a view to fighting, my limbs fail, and my mouth is parched up.

Anticipating a question, 'What did he (Arjuna) say?' the text describes it from this verse till the end of the chapter: *O Krishna, seeing these kinsmen well stationed in front, with a view to fighting, my limbs—hands, feet, etc.—fail, give way; moreover, my mouth is parched up, completely dried.*

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ॥ २९ ॥

29. My body quivers, and there is horripilation; the Gāndiva (Arjuna's bow) slips from my hands, and my skin burns.

Further, *My body quivers* etc. *Quivers*, trembles; *horripilation*, bristling of the hair; *slips*, falls down; *burns*, is scorched all over.

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ।

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ॥ ३० ॥

30. I am not able to stand, my mind is reeling, as it were, and I see, O Keshava (Sri Krishna), adverse omens.

Further, *I am not* etc. *I see adverse omens*, i.e., portents which forebode evil.

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ ३१ ॥

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२ ॥

31-32. And I see no good from killing kinsmen in battle. I do not desire victory, O Krishna, nor sovereignty, nor pleasures; of what use is sovereignty to us, O Govinda (Sri Krishna), or enjoyments, or life itself?

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ ३३ ॥

33. They for whose sake we desire sovereignty, enjoyments and pleasures, are gathered here for battle, giving up (their) lives and wealth.

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Preceptors, fathers, sons, as also grandsires; maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other kinsmen as well.

Moreover, *I see no good* etc. I do not see any good that would result from killing kinsmen in battle. It may be urged: Don't you see that it would lead to victory, and so on? To answer this the text says: *I do not desire* etc. This is being expanded in a verse and a half beginning with, *Of what use* etc., up to end of verse 33. *They for whose sake we desire sovereignty* etc. *are gathered for fight, giving up (their) lives and wealth*, i.e., undergoing such sacrifice. Therefore, of what use will sovereignty etc., be to us? This is the meaning (31-34).

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मघुसूदन ।

अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ ३५ ॥



35. I do not like to kill them, O Madhusudana (Sri Krishna), even if they should kill us, no, not even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, much less for that of this earth.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।

पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ ३६ ॥

36. What joy will be ours, O Janār-dana (Sri Krishna), by slaying these sons of Dhritarāshtra? Sin alone will overtake us if we kill these aggressors.

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबान्धवान् ।

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Therefore we ought not to kill these sons of Dhritarāshtra, our kinsmen; how can we indeed be happy, O Mādhava (Sri Krishna), by killing our own people?

It may be urged: If you do not kill them for pity, then they out of greed for the kingdom will surely kill you; therefore, you better slay them and enjoy the sovereignty. This the text answers by a verse and a half beginning with, *I do not like* etc. *Even if they should*

*kill us, I do not like to kill them, even for attaining the sovereignty of the three worlds, much less for gaining just this earth.*

It may be urged: The Smritis declare: "Those who commit arson, administer poison, attack with weapons, take away one's wealth, or lands, or wives—these six classes of persons are aggressors. And these (the Kauravas) are aggressors, having committed all the six offences beginning with arson. The slaying of aggressors is quite justifiable according to the text: "One should kill without hesitation an aggressor that approaches (with criminal intention); the slayer of an aggressor incurs no sin whatsoever." This is being answered by a verse and a half beginning with the words: *Sin alone* etc. The text, "One should kill" etc. belongs to what is called an Artha Shāstra (a Scripture dealing with wealth), which is less authoritative than a Dharma Shāstra (a Scripture dealing with virtue). As it is said by Yajnavalkya: "When two Smritis differ, the one that is more reasonable is the stronger, according to convention. And a Dharma Shāstra is more powerful than an Artha Shāstra. This is the usage." Therefore, by the slaying of preceptors etc., though they are aggressors, we shall incur sin alone, because such slaying is unwarranted and unrighteous. There can also be no happiness from this. This is being stated: *How can we* etc.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहृतचेतसः ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३८ ॥

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३९ ॥

38-39. Although these, with their minds overcome by greed, see no evil in destroying the family or sin in hostility to friends, why should we, O Janārdana, who see the evil resulting from destruction of the family, not learn to desist from this sin?

It may be urged: The aim of slaying kinsmen is common to both your case and theirs; yet, even as they, accepting such a contingency, are inclined to fight, so you too better engage yourself in battle, what is the use of this despondency? This is being answered by the two verses beginning with: *Although* etc. *Although these*, i.e., Duryodhana and others, *see no evil, with their minds overcome*, deprived of the power of discrimination, *by the greed of sovereignty*, yet *why should we, who see the evil of it, view its sinfulness, not learn to desist from this sin?* That is to say, we should resolve not to do it.

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।

धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ४० ॥

40. With the destruction of the family the time-honoured family traditions are lost; and when the traditions are lost, unrighteousness overtakes the whole family.

That very sin is being shown in the two verses beginning with: *With* etc. *Time-honoured*, handed down from generation to generation. *Unrighteousness overtakes*, pervades, *the whole* of the surviving family.

अधर्मोभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वाष्ण्ये जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ ४१ ॥

41. When unrighteousness prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt, and when the women are corrupt, O descendant of the Vrishnis (Krishna), there arises a mixture of castes.

And from that: *When unrighteousness* etc.

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।

पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४२ ॥

42. The mixture of castes in the family only leads its destroyers to hell; their ancestors fall (from heaven), for they are deprived of the offerings of funeral cakes and drink.

When this happens: *The mixture etc. Their ancestors, the ancestors of these destroyers of the family, fall (from heaven), for they are deprived of the offerings of funeral cakes and drink.*

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।

उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४३ ॥

43. From these sins of the destroyers of the family that lead to a mixture of castes, the long-standing traditions of the caste, the family, etc., are destroyed.

The sinfulness referred to is being concluded in the two verses beginning with: *From these sins etc. The traditions of the caste or tribe, and the family are destroyed, lost. etc.*, includes the duties of the various orders of life (Āshrama)<sup>1</sup> and so on.

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<sup>1</sup> The four Ashramas or orders of life are Brahmacharya or the life of a student, Gārhaṣṭhya or the house-holder's life, Vanaprastha or the life of a recluse, and Sannyasa or the life of complete renunciation.



उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।  
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Persons whose family traditions are destroyed, O Janārdana, are doomed to live perpetually in hell; thus have we heard.

*Persons etc. Persons whose family traditions are destroyed. The phrase implies also those whose caste and other traditions are lost. We have heard from such texts as this: "Those who are addicted to vice and perform no expiation, nor feel repentant for it, go to terrible hells full of misery."*

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।  
यद्राज्यमुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४५ ॥

45. Alas, what a heinous sins we are resolved to commit, in that we are ready to kill our kinsmen, out of greed for the joys of sovereignty.

Arjuna, who was grieved at their determination to kill their kinsmen, said: *Alas etc. That we are ready to kill our kinsmen—is the heinous sin we are resolved to commit. Alas, what a pity!*

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।

घातराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४६ ॥

46. If the sons of Dhritarāshtra with weapons in (their) hands should slay me in battle, while I am unarmed and unresisting, that would be better for me.

Grieving thus and welcoming death Arjuna said: *If the sons etc. If they should slay me unresisting, i.e., sitting quiet, then that slaying would be better, extremely good, for me, since it would ward off sin.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ ४७ ॥

Sanjaya said:

47. Thus speaking, Arjuna sat down on the chariot in (that) battle, casting away (his) bow and arrows, being grief-stricken at heart.

Anticipating a question, 'What happened afterwards?' the text says: *Thus etc.* He whose mind was *stricken*, agitated, with grief, *sat down on the chariot in (that) battle.*

CHAPTER II  
THE WAY OF DISCRIMINATION

सञ्जय उवाच ।

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

Sanjaya said:

1. To him thus overcome with pity and grieving, with eyes filled with tears and agitated, Madhusudana spoke these words:

What happened afterwards? To answer this the text says: *Sanjaya said: To him thus etc. To him whose eyes were filled with tears and agitated (bewildered). To him, to Arjuna, who was grieving thus, as described already, Madhusudana spoke these words.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Whence, O Arjuna, has this weakness, not entertained by honourable men

(Aryans), nor conducive to (the attainment of) heaven, and leading to ill-fame, come on you at this crisis?

Those very words are being related: *The Blessed Lord said: Whence etc. Whence, owing to what cause, has this weakness come on you, has this confusion overtaken you, at this crisis, in this strait, because it is not entertained by honourable men, nor it is conducive to (the attainment of) heaven, i.e., it is unrighteous, and productive of disrepute.*

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥ ३ ॥

3. Yield not to unmanliness, O Pārtha, it is not worthy of you; shaking off this mean faint-heartedness, arise, O scorcher of foes.

Therefore, *Yield not etc. O Pārtha, yield not to unmanliness, be not overcome by cowardice; because it is not worthy of you, it does not befit you. Shaking off this mean, contemptible, faint-heartedness, cowardice, arise for battle, O scorcher of foes, O chastiser of foes.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।

इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हविरिसूदन ॥ ४ ॥

Arjuna said:

4. How, O Madhusudana, shall I in battle fight with arrows against Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of respect, O slayer of enemies?

I am withdrawing from battle not out of cowardice, but because it is improper—this is expressed by the words: *Arjuna said: How* etc. *Bhishma and Drona*, both are worthy, deserving, of respect; *how shall I fight against* them, and that *with arrows*? When it is wrong to say even in words that I shall fight them, how can I (actually) fight with arrows? This is the idea. *O slayer of enemies, O destroyer of enemies* (Sri Krishna).

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्

श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।

हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव

भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Without killing the noble-minded elders, even to live on alms in the world



would be much better. But by killing these elders, I shall be enjoying even here pleasures like wealth and fulfilment of desires, drenched with (their) blood.

It may be urged: But without killing them even the maintenance of your body will not be possible. This is being answered: *Without killing etc. Without killing the elders* like Drona and others, without causing the death of elders that bars one from heaven, it *would be much better*, it is desirable, *to live in this world even on food obtained by begging.* Otherwise there will be misery (in store) not only hereafter, but even here I shall be experiencing the misery of hell. This is being stated: *By killing etc. But by killing these elders, even here I shall be enjoying pleasures like wealth and fulfilment of desires, drenched, besmeared all over, with blood.* Or we may take *arthakāmān* as qualifying 'elders'. These (elders) being overcome by the greed of wealth, are not likely to refrain from war. Therefore one will perforce have to kill them. Bhishma, for instance, said to Yudhishtira: "Man is a slave to wealth, but wealth is not so to any one—this is the truth, O Emperor; I am bound by the Kauravas through wealth."

न चैतद्विद्यः कतरन्नो गरीयो

यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।

यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-

स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥

6. And we do not know which would be the better course for us—whether we should conquer them or they should conquer us. Those very persons, killing whom we should not desire to live, viz., the sons of Dhritarāshtra, are gathered in front.

Moreover, even if we should choose unrighteousness, yet we cannot decide whether victory will be better for us or defeat. This is being stated: *And we do not* etc. Between these two, *we do not know which would be the better course for us*. These two (alternatives) are pointed out: *Whether we should conquer them or they should conquer us*. Further, even our victory will virtually be a defeat. This is being stated: *For those very persons, killing whom we should not desire to live, are gathered in front*.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. With my natural traits overcome by (a sense of) helplessness and sin, and my mind perplexed regarding (my) duty, I ask You—tell me that which is definitely good for me. I am Your disciple; teach me who have taken refuge in You.

Therefore, *With my natural* etc. *With my natural traits overcome by (a sense of) helplessness and sin—helplessness expressed by the idea, 'Having killed them how shall we live?' and sin due to the destruction of one's own family; I, whose natural traits such as valour are overcome by these two, ask you. Similarly, one whose mind is perplexed regarding duty, i.e., whose mind has doubts as to whether it is righteous or unrighteous for a Kshatriya to give up war and take to begging even. Therefore tell me that which is definitely good for me, that which I ought to do. Moreover, I am Your disciple, fit to be instructed by You; therefore teach me who have taken refuge in You.*

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्-

यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।

अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं

राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. I do not indeed see that which would remove this grief of mine that is utterly drying up my senses, even if I were to attain in this world a kingdom without rivals and prosperous, and even lordship over the gods.

If it be urged: You better think for yourself and do what is proper. This is being answered: *I do not etc. I do not see that action which would remove this grief of mine that is utterly drying up my senses. Even if I were to attain in this world a kingdom without rivals and prosperous, and likewise attain even lordship over the gods, thus getting everything that is coveted, still I do not see the means of overcoming this grief. This is the construction.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परंतपः ।

न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९ ॥

Sanjaya said:

9. Having thus spoken to Hrishikesa, Gudākesa (Arjuna), the harasser of foes, said to Govinda, 'I shall not fight,' and kept quiet.

Anticipating a question, 'After speaking thus what did Arjuna do?', the text says: *Sanjaya said: Having thus spoken etc.* The meaning is clear.

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।

सेनयोहभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥१०॥

10. O descendant of (King) Bharata (Dhritarāshtra), to him who was sorrowing between the two armies, Hrishikesa spoke these words, as if smiling.

What happened after this? In answer to this it is being stated: *To him etc. As if smiling*, with a beaming countenance.

श्री भगवानुवाच ।

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

11. You have been sorrowing for those who should not be grieved for, and (yet) you are talking learned words. The learned grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.

Finding that this grief of Arjuna was due to lack of discrimination between the Self and the



body, in order to show their distinction the *Blessed Lord said: You have been sorrowing* etc. "Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna, gathered for battle" etc. (I. 28)—in these words *you have been sorrowing for those* relations who were not indeed objects of sorrow. And though I instructed you saying, "Whence has this weakness come on you at this crisis" etc. (II. 2), yet *you are* again merely *talking learned words*, words befitting the wise, such as, "How shall I in battle fight against Bhishma" etc. (II. 4), but (in reality) you are not a wise man, because *the learned, the wise, grieve neither for the relations that are dead nor for the living ones*, saying, 'How will they live having lost their relations?'

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. It is not indeed that I did not exist at any time, nor you, nor these kings; nor that we all shall not exist hereafter.

The reason for their not being objects of grief is being stated: *It is not* etc. Even as *it is not that I* the supreme Lord *did not exist at any time*, even though the body associated with My divine play might come into existence and cease to exist, but I did exist always, being beginningless; *nor that you did not exist, but did exist always, nor that these*

*kings* did not exist, but did exist always, being parts of Myself—even so it is not *that we shall not exist hereafter*, but shall certainly exist. That is to say, having neither birth nor death they should not be grieved for.<sup>1</sup>

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ १३ ॥

13. Even as the embodied self attains in this body childhood, youth, and old age, so does it attain another body; the wise man does not get deluded at this.

It may be urged that it is no doubt true that You, the Lord (Ishwara), have no birth etc., but it is well known that the individual souls have birth and death. This is being answered: *Even as* etc. *Even as the embodied self*, i.e., the individual self identified with the body, *attains in this gross body* various conditions like *childhood* which are due to that body, and not by itself, for even when a previous state comes to an end and another is

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<sup>1</sup> As the Self we are eternal in all the three periods of time, viz., past, present and future. Of course the plural 'we' is used with reference, to the bodies which are different; it does not mean that there are more Selves than one. The bodies alone are perishable, but not the inner essence which is the Self.

attained, 'there is the recognition, 'I am the same person', so on the destruction of this body *does the self attain another body* on account of the subtle body only. But the self is not destroyed, for we observe, in one just born, the tendency to suck and so on, owing to past impressions. Therefore *the wise man does not get deluded at this* destruction and origination of the body, does not think that the self is dead and born.

मात्रास्पर्शस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥

14. O son of Kunti, sense-contacts (with objects) result in heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They are subject to coming and going and are transient; (therefore), O descendant of Bharata (Arjuna), (just) endure them.

It may be said: "I am not grieving for those who are dead or living, but for myself who am miserable on account of their loss and so forth." This is being answered: *O son of Kunti*, etc. Those by which the objects of the senses are perceived are called *mātrā*, i.e., the functions of the senses; their contact, or connection, with the objects produces the sensations of heat, cold, etc. But as *they*

*are subject to coming and going, they are transient, fleeting. Therefore endure them, put up with them. Just as contacts occasioned at particular times with rain, sunlight, etc., by their very nature give rise to cold, heat, etc., even so the connection and disconnection with desired objects give rise to pleasure, pain, etc. And as these are transitory. it is becoming of a wise man like you to endure them, and not to yield to mirth or despondency on account of them.*

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥

15. O best of men, that wise person whom these do not afflict, who is equanimous in pleasure and pain, is fit for immortality.

Rather than try to remedy them, one should just endure them, as this yields a great result. This is being stated: *O best of men* etc. *That person whom these sense-contacts do not afflict, overpower, who is equanimous in pleasure and pain, not being perturbed by them, becomes fit for immortality, Liberation, through his spiritual knowledge.*

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

16. The unreal has no existence, and the real has no non-existence; the conclusion about both these has been seen by the knowers of Truth.

One may urge: Nevertheless how can heat, cold, etc., that are extremely difficult to bear be endured? Too much endurance of these might sometimes even lead to the destruction of the body. In answer to this, with a view to conveying that it is possible to endure everything through discrimination of the Truth, it is being stated: *The unreal* etc. *The unreal*, such as heat and cold, which, being of the nature of non-Self, have no reality, *has no existence* in the Self. Similarly, *the real*, viz., the Self whose nature is 'being', *has no non-existence*, destruction. Thus *the conclusion about both these*, viz., the real and the unreal, *have been seen*. By whom? *By the knowers of Truth*, i.e., by those who know the true nature of things. Through such discrimination you better endure them—this is the purport.

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७ ॥

17. But know that by which all this is pervaded to be imperishable. No one

can bring about the destruction of this immutable principle.

The imperishable substance whose nature is real, and which has been taught above in a general way, is being specially shown: *But know etc. But know that reality of the Self by which all this, the body etc., which have a beginning and an end, is pervaded as its witness, to be imperishable, to have no destruction. The reason for this is being stated: No one etc.*

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

18. These bodies of the eternal, imperishable, immeasurable, embodied self are said to have an end; therefore, fight, O descendant of Bharata.

That which is characterised by a beginning and an end is being pointed out to be unreal: *These bodies etc. These bodies, characterised by pleasure, pain, etc., of the embodied self, that is, the self which possesses a body, which (self) is eternal, exists always in the same condition, and consequently imperishable, and which is immeasurable, unlimited, are said to have an end by men of realization. Inasmuch as the self is indestructible and has no connection with pleasure, pain, etc.,*



therefore giving up this grief born of confusion, *fight*, i.e., don't give up your duty.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

19. He who thinks it (self) to be a slayer and he who thinks it is slain, both are ignorant (of the truth); it (self) neither slays nor is slain.

Thus the grief that would arise from the death of Bhishma and others has been negated. As to that which would arise from his being a killer, referred to in, "I do not like to kill them" etc. (I. 35), even that is equally groundless. This is being stated: *He who* etc. *It*, i.e., the self. Just as the self is not an object of the act of slaying, even so it is not an agent (of it). The reason for this is: *It neither* etc.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्-

नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

20. It (self) is not born and it does not die at any time. And it does not again

come into existence by being born. It (self) is birthless, constant, eternal and ancient; it is not slain when the body is slain.

The idea that the self is not slain is being confirmed by its freedom from all the six changes of being: *It is not* etc. By saying *it is not born* (its) origination is denied, and by saying *it does not die* (its) destruction is denied. The word *vā* occurring twice is used in the sense of 'and'. *And it does not again come into existence by being born*, being originated. But already it is by nature 'being' itself. So the second change, viz., existence through origination, is denied (of it). The reason for this is that *it is birthless*. That which originates, attains existence after birth; but that which already exists by its own nature (i.e., which is pure being itself) cannot again attain a fresh existence. This is the idea. *Constant*, always uniform. This denies growth in it. *Eternal*, everlasting, which denies any decay in it. *Ancient* denies all modifications in it. Even in the past it was new, i.e., it does not become new by attaining another form through modification. Another rendering: Repeating the words *na bhavita* to supply an ellipsis, the meaning would be: it is not such that it will be in a magnified form, thus denying growth in it. 'Unborn' and 'constant' both give reasons for this denial of an increase in it,

and so there is no repetition. Thus the six changes of condition viz., birth, existence, growth, modification, decay and destruction, mentioned by Yāska and other (expounders of the Vedas to be the nature of all things in this world), are denied (of the self). The imperishability of the self, to establish which these six changes were denied in it, and which is the topic under discussion, is being concluded: *It is not slain when the body is slain.*

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Whom, O Pārtha, can that person who knows this (self) to be imperishable, constant, birthless and immutable slay or cause to be slain, and how?

Therefore the denial of agency in the act of slaying referred to before is established. This is being stated: *Whom etc. Whom can that person who knows this constant, i.e., free from any increase, immutable, i.e., free from decay, birthless and imperishable one slay, and how?* For there is no means to slay one who is like this. So also whom can he cause to be slain through another, himself being the instigator? That is, none and by no means. This is the meaning. By this it is also said, "Do not accuse Me also of instigating (you to kill)."

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय

नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-

न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

22. Just as a person gives up worn out clothes and puts on other new ones, even so does the embodied self give up decrepit bodies and enter other new ones.

It may be urged: "Though the self is not killed, yet reflecting on the destruction of its body I am grieving." This is being answered: *Just as* etc. As new bodies, which are dependent on actions, are sure to follow, there is no room for grief at the destruction of worn out bodies. This is the purport.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मातृतः ॥ २३ ॥

23. Weapons do not cut it, fire does not burn it, water also does not moisten it, and wind does not dry it.

The imperishable nature of the self is being made explicit by showing the absence of any means to slay the self, already stated in the words, "How does he slay" etc. *Weapons* etc. *Water does not moisten it*, does not disintegrate it by softening. *The wind also does not dry it*.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

24. This (self) is indeed incapable of being cut, incombustible, incapable of being moistened and of being dried; it is eternal, all pervading, stable, immovable, and primordial.

The reason for it is being stated in this and the first half of the next verse: *This (self) is* etc. Being without parts, *it is incapable of being cut and moistened*. Being formless, *it is incombustible*. Being free from moisture, *it is incapable of being dried*. This is the idea. Here is another reason why it is not liable to be cut etc.—because *it is eternal, indestructible; all-pervading, existing everywhere; stable, of fixed nature, never attaining any new form; immovable, not giving up its former condition, and primordial, beginningless*.

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

25. This (self) is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchangeable; therefore, knowing it to be such, you ought not to grieve.

Further, it is *unmanifest*, not an object of the eye and other senses. *Unthinkable*, not an object of the mind either. *Unchangeable*, that is to say, not an object of the organs of action also. The words 'is said to be' adduce authoritative testimony in support of the eternity etc. (stated in the previous, verse). It is being concluded: *Therefore* etc.

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।

तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

26. If, however, you think that it (self) is perpetually born and perpetually dies, even then, O mighty-armed one, you ought not to grieve for it.

Thus it has been stated that because the self has neither birth nor destruction, one should not grieve for it. Now it is being stated that even accepting that the self is born with the body and dies with its death, one should not grieve. *If*, etc.



Even *if you think that it, the self, is perpetually born, when a particular body is born, and dies, when that particular body meets with destruction, since virtue and sin and their results, birth and death, are attached to the self, even then you ought not to grieve.*

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।  
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

27. For to one who is born, death is certain, and to one who dies, rebirth is certain. Therefore over this inevitable fact you ought not to grieve.

Why? This is being answered: *For to one etc. Because to one who is born, death is certain when the actions that originated it get exhausted. Similarly, to one who dies, (re) birth is indeed certain on account of the work done in that body. Therefore over this inevitable fact of birth and death, you, a wise man, ought not to grieve, i.e., you are not meant (for such a conduct).*

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।  
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

28. Beings, O descendant of Bharata, have the Unmanifest as their beginning,

are manifest in the middle, and have their dissolution in the Unmanifest itself; so why lament for them?

Moreover, considering the nature of the bodies etc., and the fact that birth and death of the self are due to these adjuncts, one should not grieve at it. So it is being stated: *Beings* etc. *Beings*, or bodies, have the Unmanifest, the Pradhāna, as their beginning, the condition in which they exist before origination; for it is only things that exist in their causal form that are manifested. Similarly they are manifest in the middle, the interval between birth and death constituting the state of existence. And they have their dissolution, destruction, in the Unmanifest. They are verily of this nature. *Why lament out of grief for them?* That is to say, grief is not befitting, as in the case of a man who has woke up and still is grieving for the friends seen in a dream.

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-

माश्चर्यवद्ब्रूदति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति

श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

29. One sees this (self) as a wonder, so also another talks of this as a wonder,

still another hears of this as a wonder, and some other, 'again, does not know this even after hearing, etc., about it.

Why, then, do even wise men grieve in this world? It is simply due to their ignorance about the self. Having this in mind, the abstruseness of the self is being stated: *One sees* etc. *One* realizing *this* self with the help of the precepts of the Scriptures and the teacher, *sees* it *as a wonder*. As the self, which is all-pervading and of the nature of eternal knowledge and bliss, is supernatural, one is bewildered at seeing it, being overcome by its incomprehensibility, like one seeing something impossible like magic. *So another talks and hears of this* verily *as a wonder*. *Some other, again*, being overpowered by wrong notions, fails to know *this even after hearing etc.*, shows that even talking about this and seeing this, some do not know it fully.

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

30. This embodied self in everyone's body is eternally indestructible, O descendant of Bharata (Arjuna); therefore, you ought not to grieve for any creature.

Thus in the course of teaching in brief the incomprehensibility of the self, the topic that

one should not grieve for it is being concluded:  
*This embodied self* etc. The meaning is quite clear.

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

31. And considering your duty also you ought not to falter, because there is no greater good-fortune for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle.

And what Arjuna said, viz., "My body quivers and there is horripilation" (I. 29), that, too, is unbecoming. This is being stated: *And considering* etc. Just because there is no death for the self, you should not falter even at slaying these; *and considering your duty also you ought not to falter*—this is the connection. And what was said in, "I see no good from killing kinsmen in battle" (I. 31), is being answered: *Because* etc. *Than a righteous battle*, than a battle that is not divorced from righteousness, i.e., a lawful battle.

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. And happy, O Pārtha, are the Kshatriyas who get such a battle, which

has come of its own accord, and is an open gateway to heaven.

Moreover, why should there be any faltering when such a great good fortune has come unsought? This is being stated: *And happy*, etc. The *happy*, or the fortunate, alone *get such a battle, which has come of its own accord*, unsought, for this is verily *an open gateway to heaven*. Or (it may mean): Those alone who get such a battle are happy. By this what was said in, "How can we indeed be happy by killing our own people" (I. 37), is refuted.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३३ ॥

33. If, however, you do not fight this righteous battle, then failing in your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin.

This disadvantage of acting contrary to this is being shown: *If, however, you etc.*

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Besides, people will talk of your eternal infamy; and for one held in esteem infamy is worse than death.

Further: *Besides, people etc. Eternal everlasting. For one held in esteem, for an honourable man, infamy is worse than death.*

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥

35. (These) mighty warriors will think that you have retired from battle through fear. Having been highly esteemed by them, you will (now) fall into disgrace.

(These) mighty etc. Moreover, those who held you in high esteem before as possessing many good qualities, will (now) think that you have retired from battle through fear. Thereby, having been highly esteemed before, you will (now) fall into disgrace.

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. And your enemies will be saying many unmentionable things, decrying your prowess. What can be more painful than that?

Further: *And etc. And your enemies will say*



*unmentionable things*, i.e., words that are not fit to be uttered.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।  
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Either, killed (in battle), you will attain heaven, or, being victorious, you will enjoy the earth. Therefore arise, O son of Kunti, resolved to fight.

The statement made before, viz., "And we do not know which would be the better course for us—whether we should conquer them or they should conquer us" (II. 6), is being answered: *Either* etc. That is to say, in either case you will only be a gainer.

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।  
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Regarding pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, as alike, prepare yourself then for battle; you will not thus incur sin.

And what was said in the passage, "Sin alone will overtake us" etc. (I. 36), is being answered: *Regarding* etc. *Regarding as alike pleasure and pain,*

also their cause, viz., *gain and loss*, and also the cause of these, viz., *victory and defeat*. The cause of equanimity with regard to these is freedom from elation and despondency. *Prepare yourself, get ready (for battle)*. Giving up the desire for pleasure etc., if you fight from a sense of duty, *you will not incur sin (thereby)*.

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९ ॥

39. The (requisite) mental attitude towards the Self has just been taught to you, now hear about it in respect of the way of action (Karma-Yoga), being endowed with which (attitude), O Partha, you will get rid of the bondage of actions.

The way of knowledge that has been taught is being concluded, and the way of action (Karma-Yoga), which is a means to that, is being introduced: *The (requisite) mental* etc. That by which the nature of the Reality is described or revealed, is Sāṅkhya, i.e., adequate knowledge, and the nature of the Self that is revealed through it is Sāṅkhya; *the mental attitude* that you have to create with respect to it *has just been taught to you*. If, in spite of this attitude towards the Self being thus imparted, you do not have the intuition of the nature of the Self, then *hear about it*, this attitude,

*in respect of the way of action (Karma-Yoga) for attaining this intuition of the Self through the purification of the mind. Endowed with which attitude, you will attain purity of mind through the way of the surrender of actions to the Lord, and you will completely get rid of the bondage consisting of actions by means of intuitional knowledge obtained through His grace.*

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४० ॥

40. In this there is no waste of any undertaking nor chance of incurring sin: even the least bit of this religion saves one from great danger.

It may be urged: Activities, such<sup>\*</sup> as agriculture, sometimes fail to produce results owing to numerous obstacles, and there are chances of incurring sin owing to defects in the utterance of Mantras or other subsidiary parts<sup>1</sup>. So how can the bondage of actions be got rid of through Karma-Yoga? This is being answered: *In this* etc. *In this* way of action without desires, *there is no waste of any undertaking*, action, that has already

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<sup>1</sup> If in the performance of the rituals prescribed by the Vedas there be such defects as these, then these observances, instead of producing the desired fruit, result in harm to the performer.

been begun; *nor* is there any *chance of incurring sin* since obstacles, defects, etc., cannot exist on account of everything being done for the sake of the Lord. Moreover, *even the least bit*, even a beginning merely, *of this religion saves one from great danger*, viz., the transmigratory existence; and there is no chance of its being wasted like an action done with desire, through defects, etc., in any of its parts. This is the idea.

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. In this, descendant of Kuru, there is a single one-pointed determination. The thoughts of the irresolute are many-branched and infinite.

It may be asked why? Hence the difference between the two (viz. work done with and without desires) is being shown: *In this* etc. *In this Karma-Yoga* which is done in adoration of the Lord, *there is a single one-pointed determination*, a single settled conviction of the kind: I shall certainly be saved just through devotion to the Lord. But in the case *of the irresolute*, i.e., of persons with desire having outgoing tendencies, *their thoughts are infinite* owing to the infinite number of their desires, and even as that, *they are many-branched* owing to their varieties

like the results of main actions and subsidiary actions. Regular rites (Nitya Karma)<sup>1</sup> and occasional rites (Naimittika Karma)<sup>2</sup> done in adoration of the Lord are not wasted even if there should be any defect in their accessories; for regarding them it is ordained. "One should perform according to one's capacity"; and there can be no defect, for it ceases to exist by the very fact that it is done for the sake of the Lord. But work done for the sake of desires is not like that. Hence there is great difference between the two.

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ ४२ ॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।

क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ ४३ ॥

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।

द्वयवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ ४४ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> Nitya Karma or regular rites prescribed by the Vedas, the non-performance of which causes sin or harm, or, according to another view, the performance of which removes sin.

<sup>2</sup> Naimittika Karma or occasional rites observed on special occasions, as on the birth of a son. They are also enjoined by the Vedas, and their performance is obligatory for a householder

42-44. The dull-witted, whose minds are full of desires, who regard heaven as their highest goal, who are enamoured of the panegyric statements in the Vedas and assert that there is nothing else (higher than this), speak familiar flowery words about numerous kinds of rites (prescribed by the Vedas) producing birth, actions, and their results, as the means to enjoyment and power. Those who are attached to enjoyment and power, and whose minds are carried away by these (flowery words) do not attain one-pointed determination leading to concentration on the Lord.

One may question: Why do not even persons with desire give up desires which are difficult to fulfil, and take to this one-pointed determination? This is being answered: *The dull-witted* etc. The connection is with the stanza after next as follows: One-pointed determination leading to concentration is not attained by those whose minds are carried away by the flowery words—fine words that are appealing for the time being like a poisonous creeper in blossom—of those who refer to the mention of heaven etc., in the Vedas and say that it



only sets forth results constituting the highest end of human life (Liberation). Why do they talk like that? Because they are *dull-witted*, unwise. The reason for their dullness is that *they are enamoured of*, i.e., are satisfied with, only *the panegyric statements in the Vedas*, like: "For everlasting indeed is the merit of those who perform the rite that lasts for four months"; "We have drunk the soma juice and have become immortal" (RV. 8.48.3) etc. Therefore they *assert that there is nothing else*, no other entity called God higher than that to be attained (42). For this very reason they are people *whose minds are full of desire*, and hence they *regard heaven as their highest goal*. They *speak familiar, flowery words*—this is the connection—*about numerous kinds of rites producing birth, actions done in them and their results, as the means to enjoyment and power* (43). And, therefore, *Those who are attached to*, are intent on, *enjoyment and power, and whose minds are carried away*, attracted, *by these flowery words, do not attain one-pointed determination leading to concentration of the mind, turning it exclusively towards the Lord*. 'Vidhiyate' is an instance of reflexive use (44).

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ ४५ ॥

45. The Vedas deal with subjects coming under the three Gunas; O Arjuna, be above the three Gunas, free from the dualities, always established in goodness (Sattva), regardless of acquisition or preservation, and self-possessed.

It may be urged: If heaven etc. are not the highest goal, why do the Vedas prescribe rites as means to them? This is being answered: *The Vedas deal* etc. *The Vedas deal* with those aspirants who are under the sway of the three Gunas and are full of desire. That is, they relate the connection between rites and their results for such people. But you *be above the three Gunas*, or free from desires. The way to that is being stated: *Be free from the dualities*, the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, happiness and misery, that is, endure them. How? This is explained: Being *always established in goodness*, that is, taking recourse to fortitude: Likewise, *regardless of acquisition or preservation*: Acquisition (Yoga) is accepting what one has not, and preservation (Kshema) is, protecting what one already possesses; (be) without (any effort for) both. *Self-possessed*, vigilant. Certainly it is not possible for one who is swayed by the dualities, is busy with acquisition and preservation, and is inadvertent, to transcend the three Gunas.

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।

तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ ४६ ॥

46. All the purpose that small reservoirs serve, is served by a vast lake entirely filled with water. Similarly the purpose that all the Vedas serve is attained by a man of realization.

It may be urged that one-pointed determination which seeks to worship the Lord in a disinterested way by giving up the various fruits described in the Vedas, is indeed a pernicious resolve. This is being answered: *All the purpose* etc. That from which water is drunk is Udapāna (reservoir), that is, well, tank, etc. As in such small receptacles of water all the needs of a person cannot be satisfied in one place, he has to go round (to different reservoirs) to satisfy all his necessities like bathing and drinking, separately. But just as all these different purposes are served *by a vast lake entirely filled with water*, even so *a man of realization*, i.e., one who has one-pointed determination, and is steadfast in Brahman, has indeed all the results of the various rites prescribed throughout the Vedas, for the bliss of Brahman includes all finite joys. As the Sruti says: "On a fraction of the basis of This (Self) do all other

creatures live" (Brih. 4.3.32). Therefore this determination alone is the right resolve.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

47. To work alone you have the right, but never claim its results. Let not the results of actions be your motive, nor be attached to inaction.

It may be urged: Then considering that the results of all actions are attained simply by worshipping the Lord, one should devote oneself to that, (and what is the good of work?). Against this conclusion it is being stated: *To work alone*, etc. *You*, who are an aspirant after the highest knowledge, *have the right only to work. Never claim or hanker after, its results*, which are the causes of bondage. But, one may urge, an action done is sure to produce results, as eating gives satisfaction. Anticipating this, it is being stated: *Let not the results of actions be your motive*. Be not one who is actuated by the results of actions. As heaven, etc. result only when desired, being an adjunct of the person who is enjoined (by the Scriptures) to perform rites, what is not desired does not take place. This is the idea. Again, because work.

binds, *be not attached*, but not devoted, through fear, *to inaction*.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८ ॥

48. Established in Yoga, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), perform actions, giving up attachment, and unconcerned as to success or failure; (this) equanimity is called Yoga.

What then (is to be done)? *Established in Yoga perform actions. Yoga is exclusive devotion to the Lord; being established therein, perform actions, and that also giving up attachment, consciousness of agency; work depending solely on the Lord, unconcerned as to the success or failure, attainment or non-attainment of its result, viz., knowledge; work, as an offering to the Lord alone. For this kind of equanimity alone is called Yoga by the wise, as it consists in a concentration of the mind.*

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ ४९ ॥

49. Far inferior is work (prompted by desire) to work done through wisdom,

O Dhananjaya. Take refuge in wisdom; those who are impelled by results are miserable.

But work prompted by desire is very inferior. This is being stated: *Far inferior*, etc. *Work done through wisdom*, i.e., Karma-Yoga performed with one-pointed determination, or (it may mean) Karma-Yoga which is the means to wisdom. Compared with this, *work* promoted by desire is *far*, extremely, *inferior*. Because it is so, therefore *take refuge in wisdom*, knowledge, i.e., perform Karma-Yoga; (or it may mean) take refuge in the Lord, the Saviour who abides in the intellect. But *those who are impelled by results*, the man of desire, are *miserable* or *wretched*. For the Sruti says; "He, O Gārgi, who departs from this world without knowing this Immutable, is miserable" (Brih. 3.8.10).

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कोशलम् ॥ ५० ॥

50. Endowed with this wisdom, one gets rid of both good and evil (even) here; therefore take to Yoga; Yoga is the skill in work.

But one who is engaged in action done with wisdom is superior. This is being stated: *Endowed*



etc. Through the grace of the Lord such a person gets rid of both good and evil work, which lead to heaven and hell respectively, (even) here, in this very life. Therefore take to *Yoga*, strive after Karma-Yoga, to attain this end. Because, *Yoga is the skill in work*, is that dexterity in work which turns even actions though they (ordinarily) lead to bondage, into means for Liberation by performing them for the sake of the Lord.

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ ५१ ॥

51. Endowed with wisdom, giving up the fruit resulting from action, attaining self-realization, and freed from the bondage of birth, verily, they go to that abode which is free from evil.

How actions turn out to be means to Liberation is being stated: *Endowed* etc. They who giving up the fruit resulting from action, do work merely for the sake of worshipping the Lord, they attaining self-realization, knowledge and being freed from the bondage of birth, go to that abode of Vishnu known as Liberation, which is free from evil, all troubles.

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥ ५२ ॥

52. When your understanding will get beyond the maze of delusion, then you will have attained indifference to what is to be heard and what is heard.

If it be urged: When shall I attain to that abode?—that is being stated in the two verses: *When* etc. Identifying oneself with the body etc., is delusion; that itself is the maze, or abyss, for that is the synonym given by dictionaries and lexicons. Therefore the meaning is this: Worshipping the Lord thus, *when* through His mercy *your understanding will completely get beyond this maze of delusion* consisting in the identification of the Self with the body, *then you will have attained*, i.e., you will attain, *indifference*, dispassion, for things that are *to be heard and have been heard*. You will cease to inquire about them as they are not worth having. This is the meaning.

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ५३ ॥

53. When your understanding (now) perplexed by hearing will rest in Samādhi (the Lord), unwavering and steady, then you shall attain Yoga.

Moreover, *When your* etc. *When your understanding (now) perplexed by hearing*, which till now is

distracted by hearing about various objects of enjoyment, scriptural<sup>1</sup> and worldly<sup>2</sup>, *will rest in Samādhi*, in that in which the mind gets settled, viz., the Lord, *unwavering*, not attracted by any other object, *and therefore steady*, i.e., owing to skilful practice remains fixed therein, *then you shall attain Yoga*, that is, the fruit of Yoga, viz., knowledge of the Truth.

अर्जुन उवाच ।

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥ ५४ ॥

54. What is the definition, O Keshava (Krishna), of a man of steady wisdom, absorbed in contemplation? How does a man of steady wisdom talk, how does he sit and how does he walk?

Desirous of knowing the characteristic of the man of self-realization referred to in the previous verse *Arjuna said: What is etc. What is the definition of a man who by nature rests in contemplation, and, therefore, whose wisdom or understanding is steady?*

<sup>1</sup> Like heaven.

<sup>2</sup> Like riches.

That by which a thing is described is a definition, i.e., characteristic. Due to what characteristic in him is he called a man of steady wisdom? This is the meaning. Again, *how does such a man of steady wisdom talk, sit and walk?*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ ५५ ॥

55. When a man gives up all desires of the mind, O Pārtha, and himself delights in his Self, then he is said to be a 'man of steady wisdom.'

Now, what are the means to knowledge for an aspirant, are, when they become natural, the very characteristics of one who has reached the goal. Hence, by merely relating the characteristics of a man of realization, the direct means to knowledge are also related thereby, till the end of this chapter. Now, the answer to the first question is being given in the two verses: *When a man gives up etc. When a man gives up completely all the desire of the mind, which results when he himself, of his own accord, delights in his Self* whose nature is

supreme bliss, when being delighted in (the bliss of) the Self, he gives up all desires for paltry things, then, by that characteristic, a sage is said to be 'a man of steady wisdom'.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ ५६ ॥

56. He who is unperturbed in misery and free from desires amidst pleasures, who is devoid of all attachment, fear and anger—that sage is said to be of steady wisdom.

Further, *He who* etc. *He who is unperturbed*, is not agitated, even getting *misery*, who is *free from desires amidst pleasures*, since he is *devoid of all attachment, affection, fear and anger—that sage is said to be of steady wisdom*.

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५७ ॥

57. He who is free from affection everywhere, and who getting whatever good or evil neither welcomes nor hates them has steady wisdom.

The question, 'How does such a person talk?' is being answered: *He who* etc. *He who is free from*

*affection everywhere, even towards friends, sons, etc., and therefore getting, on account of the recurrence of what has been sublated (by knowledge), whatever good, or what is congenial, and evil, or what is uncongenial, neither welcomes, praises, nor hates, criticises, but talks as one unconcerned, has steady wisdom. This is the meaning.*

यदा संहरते चाय कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५८ ॥

58. And when he completely withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, even as a tortoise its limbs, (then) his wisdom is steady.

Further, *And when* etc. *When* this Yogi *withdraws*, controls, *his senses from sense-objects* like sound, (then his wisdom is steady). In this matter of withdrawal (of the senses) without effort, an example is being given: *Even as a tortoise withdraws (within itself) its limbs—hands, feet, etc., with ease.*

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ ५९ ॥

59. From an abstemious embodied being (man) sense-objects fall off, but not



the relish (for them); but even this relish of the man of steady wisdom ceases when that supreme Being is realized.

It may be urged: The want of inclination of the senses towards sense-objects cannot be a characteristic mark of a man of steady wisdom, as even lazy, sick, and fasting persons also have no such inclination. This is being answered: *From* etc. Enjoying the objects with the senses is *āhāra*. *From an embodied being*, or one who identifies himself with the body—an ignorant person, who is *abstemious*, who does not enjoy sense-objects with the senses, the *sense-objects fall off*, the experience of the sense-objects ceases, *but not the relish*, attachment or craving (*for them*). That is to say, the craving does not depart. *But even this relish*, craving, *of a man of steady wisdom ceases*, is destroyed, of itself, *when that supreme Self is realized*. Or (it may mean): The sense-objects ordinarily fall away from one who is fasting, as one who is afflicted with hunger does not want (to enjoy) sound, touch, etc. (i.e., the sense-objects), but not taste. That is to say, the relish (for food) does not depart. The rest (of the interpretation) is common.

यततो ह्यपि कोन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ ६० ॥

60. The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, forcibly lead astray the mind of even the struggling wise person.

Since without the control of the senses it is not possible to attain the state of steadiness in wisdom, therefore during the period of spiritual practice (Sādhana) one should struggle hard for this end. This is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *The turbulent etc. The senses forcibly, violently, lead astray the mind of even the wise or discriminative person who is struggling, making an effort, for Liberation, for the senses are turbulent, distracting.*

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६१ ॥

61. Controlling all these (senses), the self-controlled one should sit meditating on Me. Verily, his wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control.

Since it is so, therefore it is being said: *Controlling etc. Controlling all those senses, the self-controlled one, the Yogi, should sit meditating on Me.* By this, the answer to the question, 'How does he sit?' is stated: 'With his senses under control, he sits without activity.'

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२ ॥

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३ ॥

62-63. For a person thinking of the sense-objects there grows an attachment for them; from attachment arises desire, from desire results anger, from anger results delusion, from delusion results confusion of memory, from confusion of memory results destruction of intelligence and from destruction of intelligence he perishes.

Having pointed out the defects in not having the external senses under control, those in not having the mind under control are being shown in the two verses beginning with: *For a person* etc. *For a person* who is given to dreaming about sense-objects considering them agreeable, *there grows an attachment for them; from attachment there arises a greater desire for them; from desire results anger* when any one stands in the way of realizing it; *from anger results delusion*, loss of discrimination as to what is not to be done; *from that results confusion*, lapse, of memory with respect to the teachings of the

Scripture and the preceptor. From that *results destruction of intelligence*, its stupefaction, as in trees etc.; thereupon *he perishes*, becomes dead, as it were.

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥ ६४ ॥

64. But that person of controlled self who moves about amidst sense-objects with the senses governed by the self and free from attachment and aversion,—he attains serenity.

It may be urged: Since it is impossible to control the senses, which by nature tend towards their objects, it is difficult to overcome those defects, and so where is the possibility of attaining a 'steady wisdom'? Apprehending such a doubt the text says in the two verses beginning with: *But that* etc. *A person whose senses are free from attachment and aversion, free from excitement, though he moves about amidst sense-objects, experiences sense-objects, yet attains serenity or peace.* The freedom from attachment and aversion is being explained: He whose *senses are governed by the self*, the mind, which (again) is under his control. By this the fourth question, 'How does he move amidst or experience (sense-objects)?' is answered: He experiences the sense-objects with his senses under control.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ ६५ ॥

65. When this serenity is attained there results the destruction of all his misery. Verily, the wisdom of the serene-minded one gets steady soon.

What happens when serenity is attained? This is being stated: *When this* etc. *When this serenity is attained there results the destruction of all misery.* Further, *the wisdom of the serene-minded one gets steady.*

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ ६६ ॥

66. For the uncontrolled person there is no knowledge, nor is there meditation for him; and for the unmeditative person there is no peace, and for one bereft of peace how can there be happiness?

The control of the senses as a means to the attainment of 'a steady wisdom' is being demonstrated in a converse way: *For the* etc. *For the uncontrolled person*, one who has not his senses under control, *there is no knowledge* or wisdom even about the Self derived from the teachings of the Scripture

and the preceptor; so its steadiness is out of the question. Why? That is being stated: *For the uncontrolled* etc. And for the uncontrolled person there is no *meditation*. By meditation alone the intellect gets established in the Self, and this the uncontrolled person, has not. *And for the unmeditative person*, one who does not meditate on the Self, there is no peace, resting of the mind in the Self, *and for one bereft of peace, how can there be happiness, the bliss of Liberation?*

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नाविमिवाम्भसि ॥ ६७ ॥

67. Whichever of the wandering senses the mind follows, that one carries away his wisdom as the wind a ship on the sea.

The reason why an uncontrolled person has no knowledge is being stated: *Whichever* etc. *Whichever of the uncontrolled senses wandering at will among their objects the mind follows*, goes out with it slavishly, *that one particular sense by itself carries away the wisdom of the mind or of the person*, makes the mind or the person restless for the object. So it goes without saying that many of them do carry away the wisdom. *As the wind tosses on the sea the ship of a helmsman who is out of his wits, even so (do*



the senses of an uncontrolled person toss his wisdom).

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६८ ॥

68. Therefore, O mighty-armed one, he whose senses are well controlled from their objects has steady wisdom.

The control of the senses which has been related as a means to, and characteristic of, 'a steady wisdom' is being concluded: *Therefore* etc. (As concluding the means, the last portion of the verse would mean:) 'attains steady wisdom.' As concluding the characteristic, it would mean: 'should be known to have steady wisdom.' By addressing (Arjuna) as *mighty-armed* it is hinted: 'You who have been able to control the enemy must have that ability here also (i.e., in the control of the senses).'

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९ ॥

69. That which to all creatures is night, is where the man of self-control is wide awake, and that in which (all) creatures are wide awake is night to the sage who sees.

It may be urged: But we do not see any one in this world so perfectly self-controlled as to be like one in deep sleep free from all activities like seeing. Therefore this definition is altogether inapplicable. Apprehending such a doubt the text says: *That* etc. *That which to all creatures is night*, is night, as it were, viz., self-abstraction, for in that (spiritual sphere) those whose minds are covered by the darkness of ignorance about the Self do not experience anything, *is where*, in which condition of abiding in the Self, *the man of self-control*, one who has controlled the senses, *is wide awake*. But the condition of being engrossed in the sense-objects (material condition) *in which all ordinary creatures are wide awake*, *is night to the sage who sees the Self (only)*. He does not experience anything in it. This is what is meant: Just as owls etc., which are blind by day see only during the night and not during the day, so also one who has realized Brahman, though his eyes are wide open, sees only Brahman and not the sense-objects. Therefore this definition is not altogether inapplicable.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं

समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे

स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ ७० ॥

70. He attains peace into whom all sense-objects enter, even as rivers enter an ocean which is unaffected though being ever filled, and not one who is desirous of enjoyments.

It may be urged: Since he does not care for sense-objects how does such a person experience them? To answer this the text says: *He attains to peace etc. Even as into the ocean which is unaffected, which never transcends its limits though being ever filled by the waters of various rivers, fresh rivers again flow, so also that sage or man of self-introspection into whom all sense-objects enter owing to the influence of Prārabdha Karma<sup>1</sup> without his being affected by the enjoyments,—he attains peace, Liberation, and not one who is desirous of enjoyment.*

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ७१ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> Actions which have already begun to bear fruit. That part of the actions done in previous lives which has brought about the present life and which will influence it till death. When one attains knowledge of the Self all actions except these become ineffective and produce no results. But the Prārabdha must run out its course, though it does not affect a realized soul as he is always poised in the Self.

71. That person who is giving up all sense-objects goes about unattached, devoid of the idea of ownership and free from egoism—he attains peace.

Since it is so, therefore it is being stated: *That person etc. That person who giving up, renouncing or ignoring all sense-objects, that have been attained and not yearning for those that have not been attained, being free from egoism, and consequently devoid of the idea of ownership with respect to the means of enjoying these objects and being introspective, goes about enjoying objects or to different places owing to Prārabdha Karma, he attains peace.*

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ ७२ ॥

72. This is the Brāhmi state, O Pārtha (Arjuna), attaining it one is not (again) deluded; one who rests in it even at the time of death, attains Nirvāna in Brahman.

Extolling the path of knowledge that has been described it is being concluded: *This etc. The Brāhmi (divine) state, i.e., the path of knowledge about Brahman, is of this kind (as related in earlier verses): Attaining it a person, who has become*

pure-minded by worshipping the Lord *is not deluded*, does no more come under the delusion of transmigration. Since *one who rests in it* just for a moment *even at the time of death, attains Nirvāṇa*, dissolution, *in Brahman*, it is superfluous to say that one who is established in it from boyhood of course attains it.

He who raised His devotee Arjuna, who had fallen into the mire of despondency, by instructing him in the Yoga of wisdom—that Krishna is my refuge.

**CHAPTER III**  
**THE WAY OF ACTION**

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said:

1. If in Your opinion, O Janārdana, knowledge is superior to action, then why do You, O Keshava, engage me in this terrific action?

Thus at the very outset in, "You were sorrowing for those who should not be grieved for" etc. (II. 11) and the subsequent verses, a sense of discrimination between the Self and the body has been taught as a means to Liberation. After that in, 'The requisite mental attitude towards the Self has just been taught to you, now hear about it in respect of the way of action (Karma-yoga)' etc. (II. 39) and the subsequent verses, action has been explained. But between them the relation of one being subordinate to the other has not been clearly stated. Now, with respect to 'the man of steady wisdom', endowed with knowledge, (qualities like)



non-attachment, self-control, non-egotism being mentioned, and also on account of the laudatory conclusion, "This is the Brāhmi state, O Partha" etc. (II. 72), *Arjuna*, who thought that between knowledge and action, the Lord regarded knowledge as superior, said: *If in Your opinion* etc. *If in Your opinion knowledge is superior*, greater or more worthy as compared with action, on account of its being a direct means to Liberation, then why do You engage me in, incite me to, this terrific, destructive, action, by repeatedly telling me, 'therefore fight', 'therefore arise' ?

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धि मोहयसीव मे ।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ २ ॥

2. By (these) apparently conflicting words You seem to confuse my understanding; tell (me) definitely that one thing by which I can attain final beatitude.

But then, the superiority of action also has been stated in, "There is no greater good-fortune for a Kshatriya than a righteous war" (II. 31) and other verses. Apprehending such a doubt the text says: *By (these) apparently* etc. *By these words* which are *apparently conflicting*, causing doubt, as it were, owing to praise of action in some places and of knowledge in other places, *You seem to confuse*

*my understanding, my mind, by making it swing between the two. You, who are very compassionate, can really never be perplexing, yet on account of my ignorance, it so appears to me—this is the force of the word 'seem' (in the text). Therefore between the two, tell (me) definitely that one thing, which is the better; or (it may mean): coming to a definite conclusion like, 'This alone is the means to blessedness', tell me that one thing following which I can attain final beatitude, Liberation.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नच ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

3. O sinless one (Arjuna), a twofold faith has been declared by Me earlier for this human race; the way of knowledge for the Sāṅkhyas, and the way of action for the Yogis.

In reply to this the text says: *The Blessed Lord said: O sinless one* etc. This is the purport: Your question, 'between the two tell me that which is better' would have been apt if a twofold

discipline as means to Liberation, viz., the way of action and the way of knowledge, independent of each other had been stated by Me. But I have not stated so. I have taught by both, one single devotion to Brahman; for between two of which one is subordinate to the other, (such) independence is impossible. Different forms only of a single faith suited to different aspirants has been stated. *A twofold faith*, i.e., devotion to Liberation which has two forms or aspects *has been declared*, very clearly taught, *by Me*, the omniscient one, *earlier*, in the preceding chapter, *for this human race*, for two classes of persons or aspirants, viz., those of pure and impure mind. These very stages are being specified: *The way of knowledge* etc. *For the Sāṅkhyas*<sup>1</sup> of purified minds, who have attained the stage of knowledge, for the fulfilment of this knowledge, I have taught a faith, a devotion to Brahman, through *the way of knowledge*, through contemplation etc., in passages like, "Controlling all these (senses) the self-controlled one sits meditating on Me" (II. 61). *But for the Yogis*<sup>2</sup> who are fit for action as a means to knowledge, and who aspire to the stage of knowledge, I have, for the attainment of that through the purification of the mind, taught the faith through *the way of action*, in passages like, "There is no greater good fortune for a Kshatriya

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<sup>1</sup> Sāṅkhyas—men of contemplation.

<sup>2</sup> Yogis—men of action.

than a righteous war" (II. 31). Therefore in respect of the two states of purity and impurity of the mind alone has the twofold faith been declared in, "The requisite mental attitude towards the Self has just been taught to you, now hear about it in respect of the way of action (Karma-Yoga)" (II. 39).

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नेष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

4. By not doing work a person does not reach inactivity, nor does he attain perfection by mere renunciation (of action).

Therefore till knowledge results through complete purification of the mind, actions prescribed for the different castes and stages of life (Āshramas) have to be performed. Otherwise, owing to want of purity of mind, knowledge will not result. This is being stated: *By not doing work* etc. *By not doing work*, by not performing it, a person does not reach, attain, *inactivity*, i.e., knowledge. But then, the Sruti text, "Desiring this world (the Self) alone the monks (Sannyāsins) renounce" etc. (Brih. 4. 4. 22) declares Sannyāsa as the means to Liberation. Therefore Liberation can result from renunciation alone, so what is the need for action? Apprehending

such a doubt the text says: *Nor does he* etc. *Nor does he attain, reach, perfection, Liberation, by mere renunciation (of action) done without purity of mind and unaccompanied by knowledge.*

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Verily, no one ever remains inactive even for a moment; for all are forcibly made to act by the qualities born of Prakriti.

Renunciation of actions means only being unattached to them, and not actually giving them up, for this is impossible. This is being stated: *Verily, no one* etc. *No one* whether wise or ignorant, *ever*, under any circumstances whatsoever, *remains inactive*, without doing work, *even for a moment*. The reason being, that *all men are made to act*, are engaged in action, *forcibly*, being compelled, *by the qualities* like attachment and aversion *born of Prakriti*, arising out of one's own nature.

कर्मन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ ६ ॥

6. That fool, who (outwardly) controlling the organs of action keeps dwelling on sense-objects with the mind, is called a hypocrite.

Therefore the ignorant renouncer of action is being censured: *That fool*, etc. Even *controlling*, *restraining*, *speech*, *hands* and other *organs of action*, he who under the pretext of meditating on the Lord, *keeps dwelling on sense-objects with the mind*, for being impure, the mind lacks steadfastness in the Self—he is called a *hypocrite*, a cheat, an egotistic person. This is the meaning.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।

कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ ७ ॥

7. But he, O Arjuna, who controlling the organs by the mind, performs Karma-Yoga with the organs of action, being unattached—he excels.

The man of action who is entirely opposed to him is superior. This is being stated: *But he*, etc. *But he who controlling the organs of perception by the mind*, i.e., directing them towards God, *performs*, practises, the Yoga or way, of action (Karma) *with the organs of action, being unattached*, without desire for the fruit—he excels, becomes distinguished.



That is to say, he attains knowledge through purification of the mind.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Perform the prescribed duties; for action is superior to inaction; moreover, if you are inactive, even the maintenance of your body will be impossible.

Since it is so, therefore, *perform* etc. *Perform the prescribed duties*, i.e., the regular rites, like Sandhyā<sup>1</sup>, and meditation. *For* as compared with *inaction*, abstention from work, *action is superior*, higher. *Otherwise, if you are inactive, give up all work, even the maintenance of your body will be impossible.*

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ ९ ॥

9. This world is bound by action other than that done for sacrifice; (therefore) perform actions for the sake of that, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), free from attachment.

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<sup>1</sup> Morning, noon and evening prayers of a Brāhmana.

The Sāṅkhyas say: As all action leads to bondage, it should not be performed. Refuting this it is being stated: *This world* etc. *Sacrifice* here means Vishnu (the Lord) for the Scripture says, "Sacrifice indeed is Vishnu" (Taitt. Sam. 1. 7. 44). *By action other than that done for worshipping Him, except this one (kind of work) this world is bound; but not by action done for worshipping Him. Therefore perform action properly, for the sake of that, for pleasing Vishnu, free from attachment, desire.*

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥

10. Prajāpati<sup>1</sup>, creating of yore, beings who co-exist with a sacrifice, said: "By this you multiply, let this yield you covetable objects of desire.

Even according to the words of Prajāpati, one who performs action is greater. This is being stated in the four verses beginning with: *Prajāpati*, etc. *Sahayajñāḥ* means those who co-exist with a sacrifice, i.e., the Brāhmanas and others entitled to

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<sup>1</sup> The Progenitor of all the worlds; one of the deities of the Hindu Trinity who is entrusted with the function of projecting the world.

perform sacrifices,—*creating these beings of yore*, at the beginning of creation, *Brahmā (Prajāpati)* said this: “*By this sacrifice you multiply, beget.*” ‘Begetting’ means multiplying. May you attain more and more prosperity, is the purport. The source for this is being stated: *Let this sacrifice yield you covetable objects of desire*, i.e., yield you (like a cow) all the desired enjoyments. Here the word ‘sacrifice’ stands for all obligatory work. Though the praise of work done with desire is out of place in this context, yet as it is meant to show that in general, work with desire (even) is better than inertness, it is not objectionable.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११ ॥

11. “By this entertain the gods and let the gods entertain you; entertaining each other you will both attain supreme good.

How would the sacrifice yield desired enjoyments? This is being answered: *By this* etc. *By this sacrifice you entertain the gods*, please them by oblations. *And let the gods entertain you* by producing food through rain etc. Thus *entertaining each other*, you and the gods *will mutually attain supreme good*, the desired objects.

इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

तैर्दत्तान्प्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२ ॥

12. "Being entertained by sacrifices the gods will surely bestow on you the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys what is given by them without offering it to them, is indeed a thief.

Explaining it further, the defect in not doing work is being stated: *Being entertained etc. Being entertained by sacrifices the gods will surely bestow enjoyments on you through rain etc. Therefore he who enjoys food etc. given by the gods without offering it to them through the five daily sacrifices<sup>1</sup> etc., is indeed a thief*—should be regarded as such.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ १३ ॥

13. "The good who partake of the remnants of a sacrifice are freed from all

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<sup>1</sup> The five daily sacrifices or acts of piety to be performed by a Brāhmana householder. They are, Brahmayajna or imparting scriptural knowledge to aspirants, Pitriyajna or offering oblations to the manes, Devayajna or sacrificial offerings to gods, Bhutayajna or offerings to all created beings and Nriyajna or entertainment of guests who may seek shelter with a householder.

sins; but those sinful persons who cook for their own sake, partake of sin.”

Therefore those who perform sacrifices are alone pre-eminent and not others; This is being stated: *The good* etc. Those *who partake of the remnants of the Vaishwadeva*<sup>1</sup> and other *sacrifices are freed from all sins* committed through the five destructive agencies etc. These five destructive agencies are mentioned in the Smritis as follows: “The mortar and pestle, the grindstone, the fire-place, the water-pot and the broom—these are the fivefold destructive agency of the householder. On account of them he does not attain heaven” (Manu 3. 67). *But those sinful wicked persons who cook for their own consumption and not for the Vaishwadeva sacrifice etc., partake of sin* indeed.

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Beings are born from food, food is produced from rain, rain comes from a sacrifice, and a sacrifice results from action.

Also because work keeps revolving this world cycle, it should be performed. This is being stated

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<sup>1</sup> A sacrifice in which oblations are offered daily in the fire to all the gods before one takes his meal.

in the three verses beginning with: *Beings are born* etc. *Beings are born from food* turned into semen, blood, etc. And *food is produced from rain*. That *rain again comes from a sacrifice*. And that *sacrifice results from action*, from the efforts of the sacrificer and others<sup>1</sup> it is accomplished. This is the meaning. For the Smṛiti also says: "The oblation offered in the fire reaches the sun in full, from the sun results rain, from rain results food, and from it these beings" (Manu 3. 76).

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

15.\* Know that action originates from Brahman (the Veda), and Brahman originates from the Imperishable. Therefore the all-pervading Brahman (Veda) eternally rests in the sacrifice.

So also, know that action originates etc. Know that this action consisting in effort on the

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<sup>1</sup> Viz., priests, etc.

\* This translation of the verse is according to the alternative meaning given by the commentary. This is adopted here as this is more consistent in that the word 'Brahman' throughout the verse is translated as 'Veda', while in the first meaning the word 'Brahman' occurring in the first half of the verse is rendered as 'Veda', and as 'Imperishable Brahman' in the second half of the verse.



part of the sacrificer and others (priests) *originates from Brahman*. Brahman means the Veda—know that it (action) originates from this (Veda). And know that this *Brahman* called the Veda *originates from the Imperishable*, the supreme Brahman. For the Scripture says, “This Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, etc., are like the breath of this infinite Reality” (Brih. 2. 4. 10). As this is so, i.e., since the sacrifice proceeds from the Imperishable itself, it can certainly be said to be extremely desired by it. *Therefore the Imperishable Brahman, though all-pervading, eternally, always, rests in sacrifice.* As It is attained by means of the sacrifice, It is said to rest in sacrifice, even as it is said, ‘Prosperity (Lakshmi) always resides in diligence.’ Or (it may mean): As action is the basis of the world cycle, *therefore Brahman called the Veda, though all-pervading, though, by way of the Mantras (sacred texts) and explanatory sentences (Arthavādas), it runs through all passages that either set forth existing things (connected with some sacrificial performance) or narrate some past occurrence (by way of praise), yet, (the Veda), always rests in the sacrifice<sup>1</sup> as its purport.* Therefore action like sacrifices should be performed—this is the drift.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Purva-Mimamsakas the entire Veda aims at action consisting of sacrifices, etc., which are enjoined on man in such texts as, ‘He who desires heaven should sacrifice.’ The Veda according to them, is the whole mass of sentences that

are not of human origin. It is fivefold, being divided into (1) Injunctions (Vidhi), which enjoin acts; (2) Sacred texts or sacrificial formulas (Mantras), which recall to memory things connected with some sacrificial performance. Their recital is not for any unseen mystical result, but they are connected with existing things like the deities; (3) Names (Nāmadheya), which define the thing prescribed, e.g., the word 'Udbhid' in, 'He who is desirous of cattle shall sacrifice with 'Udbhid', ' which defines what exactly is prescribed; (4) Prohibition (Nishedha), which deters one from some forbidden act resulting in harm; and (5) Arthavāda or explanatory passages by way of praise or blame, which are complementary to injunctions and prohibitions. It is threefold (1) Gunavāda, (2) Anuvāda, and (3) Bhutārthavāda. Gunavāda generally contradicts ordinary experience, e.g., 'The sacrificial post is verily the sun' where the sun cannot actually be the sacrificial post, and consequently one has to interpret it as a post shining like the sun. Anuvāda conveys sense already known otherwise, e.g., 'Fire is a remedy against cold'; and Bhutārthavāda is a statement which is neither established by other sources nor contradicted by them. It is a statement of fact, e.g., 'Indra raised his thunderbolt against Vritra.'

Now in these fivefold divisions of the Vedas there is no doubt that the injunctions, prohibitions and names have sacrifices as their one aim, as they are directly connected with them. The case of the Mantras (sacred texts) and the Arthavāda is rather doubtful, as they are not connected with the acts. But though not directly connected with them, yet they are indirectly connected with them as supplementing them with some necessary information. The commentator leaves out the former three, as their purport is beyond doubt and refers only to the latter two viz., Mantras and Arthavāda, and shows that the purport of the entire Veda is action, like a sacrifice.

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।

अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६ ॥

16. He who does not follow here this cycle thus set revolving, who leads a sinful life and delights in the senses, in vain, O Pārtha (Arjuna), does he live.

Thus as the Lord Himself has set in motion this cycle of action etc., so that beings may realize the sumum bonum of life, therefore the life of one who does not practise it, is in vain. This is being stated: *He who does not* etc. From Brahman called the Veda, which is but the word of the Lord, comes the prediliction of men for action, from that the accomplishment of action, from that rain, from rain food, from food beings and again the prediliction of (these) beings for action, as before; *he who does not follow*, act in keeping with, *this cycle thus set revolving*, who leads a sinful life, for he rejoices through his senses in the sense-objects alone, and not in action performed for worshipping the Lord; therefore *in vain*, uselessly, *does he live*.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७ ॥

17. But that person who delights only in the Self, is satisfied with the Self, is

contented in the Self alone, has no duties to perform.

Having prescribed the way of action for the ignorant for attaining purity of mind, as already described in the text, "By abstaining from work a person does not reach inaction" etc. (III. 4), the uselessness of action for the wise is being declared in the two verses beginning with: *But that person* etc. *He who delights, is gratified, only in the Self; and hence is satisfied with the Self alone, i.e., is happy experiencing the bliss in himself; hence is contented in the Self alone, is free from the desire for enjoyment, he has no duties to perform.*

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

18. He has nothing to gain by action or (lose) by inaction in this world; nor does he depend on any being for attaining his purpose.

The reason for this is being stated: *He has nothing* etc. By work done he does not gain any object, any merit. And by inaction no sin whatsoever accrues to him; for, being without any ego-consciousness, he has transcended all injunctions and prohibitions. Yet, from the Sruti text,

“Therefore these gods do not like that men attain to knowledge” (Brih. 1. 4. 10), one finds that there is a chance of the gods putting obstacles in the way of Liberation; so, for preventing such obstacles the gods should be worshipped by ritualistic work. Anticipating such a doubt, the text says: *For attaining his purpose*, Liberation, he has not to *depend on any being* from Brahmā down to an inanimate object. For, the absence of obstacles the Sruti itself declares: “Even the gods are powerless to bring about his failure, for he is the very ‘Self of the gods’” (Brih. 1. 4. 10). The indeclinable *Chana* (in the text quoted) is used in the sense of ‘even.’ As regards the man of knowledge, even the gods are powerless, unable, to bring about his failure, to obstruct his attaining to Brahman-hood. This is the meaning of the Sruti text. The obstacles from the gods are possible only before complete knowledge is attained. As the statement, “These gods do not like that man should know this Brahman” refers only to their not liking man’s attaining the knowledge of Brahman, the creating of obstacles also is indicated only with respect to that (i.e., the gods can create obstacles only before knowledge is attained and not after).

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Therefore always perform action which has to be done, unattached; verily,

man attains the highest by performing action unattached.

An action is useless only for such a man of knowledge and not for any other, therefore perform action. This is being stated: *Therefore etc. Perform well, unattached, without attachment for the fruit, action which has to be done*, which is prescribed (by Scriptures) and compulsory, actions like regular and occasional rites. For, *by performing action unattached, man attains the highest*, Liberation, through purification of the mind and knowledge.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २० ॥

20. By action alone Janaka and others realized perfection. Even considering the incentive to people you should perform action.

Here the approved usage is being adduced as authority: *By action alone etc. By action alone, being thereby purified in mind, (Janaka and others) realized, attained, perfection, complete knowledge. Even if you should consider yourself as having attained complete knowledge, yet performing action is becoming of you. This is being stated: Ever considering etc. Incentive to people, i.e., engaging*



them in their duties. 'If I perform action, all people will also do it; otherwise, following the example of the man of knowledge, the ignorant, by giving up work, will come to ruin'—*even considering thus at least the need of the welfare of people, you should perform action, and not give it up.*

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

21. Whatever a great man does others also copy; that which he accepts as authority, people only follow.

How the performance of action (by the man of knowledge) will act as an incentive to people is being stated: *Whatever etc. Others, i.e., the masses, also copy. That Scripture which a great man accepts as authority, be it one dealing with action or with renunciation, people only follow.*

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ २२ ॥

22. I have no duty to perform, O Pārtha,<sup>1</sup> (Arjuna) nor is there anything in

<sup>1</sup> Son of Pritha or Kunti, i.e., Arjuna.

the three worlds unattained which is to be attained, still I am engaged in action.

‘In this matter I am myself an example’—this is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *I have no duty* etc. *O Pārtha, I have no duty to perform*; for even in the three worlds<sup>1</sup> there is nothing which, being unattained, has to be attained, still I am engaged in action, yet I perform work.

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।

मम वर्तमानवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३ ॥

23. If ever I cease to be vigilantly engaged in action, O Pārtha, (then) people (would) follow My footsteps in everyway.

The text goes to show the ruin of the world in His not performing action. *If ever* etc. *If ever* at any time *I cease to be engaged in action* I do not perform work *vigilantly* with alertness, then people follow, would only follow, *My footsteps*.

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।

संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४ ॥

24. If I cease doing work, these worlds would be ruined, and I should be

<sup>1</sup> Heaven, earth and the regions in between.

causing an admixture of castes and destroying these beings.

What would happen then? It is being stated: *If I cease etc. Would be ruined, would be destroyed owing to absence of work. And I should be causing an admixture of castes that would result from it. Thus I alone should be destroying, polluting, these beings.*

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।  
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथाऽसक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. As the ignorant perform action being attached to it, even so, O descendant of Bharata (Arjuna), should the wise perform action unattached, desiring the welfare of the world.

The topic is being concluded by stating that even the knowers of the Self should perform action for the welfare of the world out of pity for it: *As the etc. As the ignorant perform action being attached to it, being engrossed in it (desiring its results), even so, should the wise perform action being unattached, desiring to do good to the world.*

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।  
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६ ॥

26. The wise man should not unsettle the faith of the ignorant who are attached to work. He should make them devoted to all work, performing action himself intently.

It may be urged: Out of pity, the ignorant should (rather) be instructed in the knowledge of the Self. Not so. This is being stated: *The wise man should not* etc. *To the ignorant, who are therefore attached to work one should not unsettle their faith, disturb their minds, i.e., turn their minds away from work, by instructing about the Self being a non-agent; rather he should make them devoted to work, make them perform work.* The word *Joshayet* is from the root *jush*, which is used in the sense of 'love' and 'to devote oneself to'. This is to say one should make the ignorant work. How? *Performing action himself intently, carefully.* If the mind is unsettled, then faith in work having ceased and knowledge not arising, they will lose both ways. This is the purport.

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहिमिति मन्यते ॥ २७ ॥

27. Actions are done in all cases by the Gunas of Prakriti. He whose mind is

deluded through egoism thinks, 'I am the doer.'

If the man of knowledge also has to perform action, then wherein is the difference between the ignorant and the wise? Apprehending such a doubt the difference between the two is being shown in the two verses beginning with: *Actions are done* etc. *Actions are done* in every way by the Gunas of Prakriti, i.e., by the senses, which are the products of Prakriti; (but) the ignorant person thinks, 'I am the doer, I am doing these actions'. The reason being: *He is one whose self, mind, is deluded through egoism*, by the superimposition of the Self on the senses.

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ २८ ॥

28. But he who knows, O mighty-armed one, the truth as to the differentiation of the senses (Gunas) and their functions (from the Self)—he knowing that the Gunas or senses, rest in the Gunas or sense-objects, is not attached.

But the wise man does not think so. This is being stated: *But he who* etc. 'I am not of the nature of the Gunas or senses'—this is the

differentiation between the senses and the Self. 'The actions are not in me'—this is the differentiation between actions and the Self. *He who knows the truth as to this differentiation of the senses (Gunas)<sup>1</sup> and their functions from the Self, is not attached, does not cling to the idea of agency. The reason is that he thinks: The senses rest in the sense objects and not I.*

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।

तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ २९ ॥

29. Being deluded by the constituents of Prakriti (Nature), people get attached to the senses and their functions. He who knows everything should not unsettle these people who are dull-witted and imperfect in knowledge.

What was said in "One should not unsettle the mind" etc. (III. 26), is being concluded: *Being deluded* etc. Those who *being deluded by the constituents of Prakriti, viz., Sattva etc., get attached to the Gunas, i.e., the senses and their functions, thinking, 'We are doing'. He who knows everything, who is perfect in knowledge, should not unsettle,*

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<sup>1</sup> Gunas literally mean the three constituents of Prakriti or Nature, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Here, they refer to the products of these constituents, viz., the senses.



disturb the minds of, *these people who are dull-witted and imperfect in knowledge.*

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥

30. Renouncing all actions in Me, with your mind resting on the Self, and giving up hope and idea of ownership, fight, being free from fever.

So, even the knowers of Truth should perform action. But you have not as yet realized the Truth; so just perform action.—This is being stated: *Renouncing* etc. *Renouncing all actions in Me*, offering them to Me, *with your mind resting on the Self*, with the idea, ‘I am doing as guided by the Lord, the Internal Ruler within’, *giving up hope*, without any attachment, and therefore being free from all ideas of (*meum*) ownership like ‘This action is for my sake, for accomplishing my purpose’, *fight, being free from fever, banishing grief.*

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Those men who ever practise this teaching of Mine with faith and without cavilling, are also freed from actions.

The advantage of thus performing action is being stated: *Those men etc. Those men with faith in My word and without cavilling, without finding fault with Me, thinking that I am engaging them in work which is painful, practise this teaching of Mine, are also, slowly performing action, freed from actions, like the man of perfect knowledge.*

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।

सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२ ॥

32. But those who carp at this teaching of Mine and do not practise it—know such fools, bereft of all knowledge, to be doomed.

The defects in a contrary behaviour are being stated: *But those who etc. Those who carp at, are inimical to, this teaching of Mine, this command (of Mine) that work should be performed for the sake of the Lord, and do not practise it, know such fools, people wanting in discrimination, and therefore bereft of knowledge with respect to everything, work as well as Brahman, to be doomed.*

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Even a wise man acts according to his own disposition; beings follow (their) nature; what can restraint do?

In that case, as it yields such great results, why don't all people perform their duties, restraining the senses and being unattached? This is being answered: *Even a wise* etc. *Disposition* (Prakriti), one's own nature dominated by the Samskāras or impressions of past actions. *Even a wise man*, aware of good and bad qualities, *acts according to*, in keeping with, *his own disposition* or nature. So it goes without saying that the ignorant man acts like that. Therefore, *beings*, all creatures, conform to, *follow*, *(their) nature*. This being so, *what can restraint* of the senses *do*, nature being all powerful? This is the meaning.

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ ३४ ॥

34. In respect of each of the senses, attachments and aversions to objects are fixed. One should not come under their sway, for they are impediments in one's way.

If a man's inclination is thus dependent on his nature (Prakriti) alone, then injunctions and

prohibitions are useless? Apprehending such a doubt the text says: *In respect of etc.* The repetition of the word 'sense' ('Indriyasya Indriyasya' in the text) suggests that each and every one of the senses is meant. Attachment, when the object is pleasure-giving, and aversion, when it is disagreeable—thus (*in respect of each of the senses*) attachments and aversions to their respective objects are fixed, inevitable. Hence in accordance with them is the inclination; this is the nature (Prakriti) of being. Yet the Scripture prescribes that *one should not come under their sway. For they are impediments*, obstacles, to a person who seeks Liberation. This is the purport: By producing attraction and aversion through the remembrance of sense-objects and so forth, Nature forcibly engages the unwary person in evil, like one falling into a deep torrent. But the Scripture engages him beforehand in the worship of the Lord and the like, which resists the attraction and aversion for objects, and he does not come to grief, like one who resorts to a boat before falling into the deep current.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निघनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Better is one's own duty, though defective, than another's duty well per-

formed. Death in one's own duty is better; the duty of another is fraught with fear.

Thus it has been said that a person should engage himself in his duty, giving up his normal nature which is akin to that of animals etc. Hence he might like to take up the duty of another because his own duty—war, for example—is of a harmful nature and difficult to accomplish, while that of the other, such as non-violence, is easy to perform and both are equally duties. To such a person it is being replied: *Better etc. Though defective in some respects, one's own duty is better, superior, as compared with another's duty well performed, though accomplished in all its details. The reason thereof being: For one engaged in one's own duty like war etc., even death is better, for it leads to heaven etc. But the duty of another is fraught with fear for oneself for, being prohibited, it leads to hell.*<sup>1</sup>

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्येय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३६ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> The point is this: Though we may perform another's duty perfectly in all its details from an external point of view, yet the mental outlook necessary for its performance not being there, we would only be leading a hypocritical life, which is very detrimental to the manifestation of the potentialities of the soul.

Arjuna said:

36. Prompted by what, does a man commit sin, even though unwilling, O Vārshneya (Sri Krishna), being constrained as it were, by force?

It was said, "One should not come under their sway" (III. 34). Considering this to be an impossibility, *Arjuna said: Prompted by what* etc. Vārshneya, he who has been incarnated in the Vrishni race (Sri Krishna). *O Vārshneya, prompted, directed, by what does a man commit sin, which is harmful, even though unwilling.* Inasmuch as even a person who restrains desire and anger through the strength of discrimination is seen to revert to sinfulness, it strikes me that there must be some other prompter at the root of these two. Hence this question.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३७ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

37. This is desire, this is anger, born of the constituent (of Prakriti called) Rajas—of inordinate appetite and most sinful. Know it to be an enemy here.



This is being answered: *The blessed Lord said: This is desire* etc. The cause about which you have questioned is indeed *desire*. 'But you have referred to anger also in, "In respect of each of the senses" etc. (III. 34)' (interposes Arjuna). True, but this (anger) is not different from that (desire); for anger also is this, because desire, when frustrated by anything, takes the form of anger. Hence, though anger has been referred to separately earlier, yet considering the fact that the conquest of desire leads to the conquest of anger, it is mentioned here as identified with desire. It is *born of the constituent (of Prakriti called) Rajas*. By this it is indicated that when Rajas is destroyed through an increase of Sattva (serenity), desire also is destroyed. *Know it, this desire, to be an enemy here, in the path of Liberation*. This desire has indeed to be killed by the method to be prescribed hereafter, for one cannot appease it through gifts. So it is being stated: *Of inordinate appetite, (literally) one whose food is vast, i.e., insatiable. Nor can it be appeased through peaceful means, for it is most sinful, very impetuous.*

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, as a foetus is

enveloped by the amnion, even so is this covered by it.

The inimical nature of desire is being shown: *As fire etc. As fire is enveloped, covered, by its concomitant smoke; as a mirror is covered by extraneous dust; as a foetus is enveloped by the amnion, or membrane covering the foetus, which seals it completely, even so in all these three ways is this (knowledge) covered by it, by desire.*

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३९ ॥

39. O son of Kunti (Arjuna), knowledge is covered by this eternal enemy of the wise in the form of desire, which is like an insatiable fire.

Showing what is referred to by the word 'this' (in the last verse), the inimical nature (of desire) is being made explicit: *Knowledge is covered etc. This, the discriminative knowledge, is covered by it (desire). To the ignorant, of course, at the time of enjoyment desire is the cause of pleasure. But the subsequent reaction is inimical. To the wise, on the other hand, who remember harm in it, it is the cause of pain alone even at that time. Therefore it is said to be their eternal enemy.*

Moreover, though supplied with objects of enjoyment, yet *insatiable*; and because it leads to grief and affliction, it *is like fire*. By this, its eternal inimical nature towards all is declared.

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

40. The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be its seat; covering knowledge by these, it deludes the embodied being.

Now, by declaring its seat, the means to conquer it is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *The senses* etc. As desire arises through seeing, hearing, etc., of the sense-objects, through thinking of them, and through a determination regarding them, *the senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be its seat*. Covering discriminative knowledge by these senses etc., which have the function of seeing etc., and which are its support, it *deludes the embodied being*.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Therefore, controlling the senses at the very outset, O best of the Bharatas

(Arjuna), kill this sinful thing which destroys realization and knowledge.

*Therefore* etc. As it is so, *controlling the senses*, the mind and the intellect *at the very outset*, even before being deluded, *kill, destroy,—or* (it may mean) *give up—this sinful desire completely. Realization* (Jñāna), i.e., knowledge of the Self, *knowledge* (Vijnāna), i.e., scriptural knowledge—that *which destroys* these two. Or (it may mean): Jñāna, i.e., knowledge resulting from the teachings of the Scripture and the preceptor; Vijnāna, that which results from meditation. For the Scripture says, “The intelligent aspirant, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge” (Brih. 4. 4. 21).

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ ४२ ॥

42. The senses are said to be superior (to their objects); superior to the senses is the mind; but superior to the mind is the intellect; while that which is superior to the intellect is the Self.

That nature of the Self, concentrating the mind on which it is possible to control the senses, is now being shown, differentiating it from the body:  
*The senses* etc. *The senses are said to be superior*

to the body, etc., which are cognisable objects, for they (the senses) are subtle and reveal (the objects). Hence their being distinct from the objects is also incidentally stated. *The mind*, consisting of volition, is superior to the senses, as it directs them; superior to the mind is the intellect, the determinative faculty, for volition is preceded by a decision. While that which is superior to the intellect, residing as the witness thereof and innermost, is the Self. The Self indicated by the word 'the embodied being', (mentioned) in, "It deludes the embodied being" (III. 40), is referred to by the word 'He' in the original.

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Thus knowing that which is beyond the intellect, and controlling the self (mind) by the self (intellect), kill, O mighty-armed one (Arjuna), the enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to conquer.

The topic is being concluded: *Thus* etc. Modifications like desire, which are due to the senses and their objects, are only of the intellect, but the Self is changeless, the witness of these

changes—*thus knowing the Self which is beyond the intellect, controlling, pacifying the self, the mind, by the self, by the intellect having this kind of conviction, kill, destroy, this enemy in the form of desire. Difficult to conquer, to put down, of incomprehensible activity.*

Worshipping whom with devotion through the performance of their duties, the wise have attained Liberation, that Krishna, the supreme Bliss, should be propitiated through all acts.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।

विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुर्िक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. This eternal Yoga I taught to Vivaswat, Vivaswat taught it to Manu and Manu taught it to Ikshvāku.

The Lord Hari Himself praises the way of action (Karma-Yoga) in order to reveal (the true nature of) the manifestation and disappearance (of an Incarnation) and to discriminate between the two entities, 'That' and 'thou' (of the Vedic dictum, 'That thou art').

Thus far, in the two (previous) chapters, the way of knowledge (Jñāna-Yoga) attained through the way of action (Karma-Yoga) has been declared as the means to Liberation. In order to elaborate that very thing through injunctions regarding accessories<sup>1</sup> like, "Brahman is the

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<sup>1</sup>One of the varieties of injunctions. Verse 24 of this chapter enjoins on one who sacrifices, to sublimate the various paraphernalia of a sacrifice like the ladle, the oblations and fire, with the idea of Brahman, i.e., that all these things are nothing but Brahman.



ladle" etc.<sup>2</sup> and through the discrimination of the two entities 'That' and 'thou', the *Blessed Lord*, praising it (this Yoga) at the very outset as traditionally handed down, said in the three verses beginning with: *This* etc. *This Yoga* which is eternal, as it yields eternal fruit, *I taught* of yore to *Vivasvat*, the Sun. He taught it to his son *Manu* *Shrāddhadeva*,<sup>3</sup> and *Manu* again taught it to his son *Ikshvāku*.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ २ ॥

2. This (Yoga), thus traditionally handed down, the royal sages knew. Through the great lapse of time this Yoga is lost in this world, O scorcher of foes.

*This (Yoga)*, etc. *Royal sages*, i.e., those who are kings as also sages, for example, *Nimi*, knew

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While a sacrifice ordinarily helps one to attain heaven etc., a spiritual sacrifice performed as described above gives a much higher result, as it leads the sacrificer to the realization of Brahman.

<sup>2</sup> Verses 24-29 in which various meditations are prescribed.

<sup>3</sup> *Manu* is a title given to the fourteen progenitors or sovereigns of the earth. The first *Manu*, to whom the code of *Manu* is ascribed by the orthodox, is the *Swayambhuva Manu*. *Shrāddhadeva* is the seventh *Manu* and is regarded as the progenitor of the present race of living beings.

*this Yoga taught by their ancestors, Ikshvāku and others. The reason why the kings of the day do not know it is being stated: O scorcher of foes, this Yoga through lapse of time is lost, has become extinct, in this world.*

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. That very ancient Yoga has been taught by Me to you this day, since you are My devotee and friend; for this is a supreme secret.

*That very etc. That very Yoga, the promulgators of it having become extinct, has been taught by Me to you again this day, since you are My devotee and friend. It is not taught to others by Me, for this is a supreme secret.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ ४ ॥

4. Later is Your birth and Vivaswat's birth earlier; how am I to understand this, that You taught this (to him) at the beginning?

Seeing the impossibility of the Lord's having taught the Yoga to Vivaswat, *Arjuna said: Later etc. Later, posterior, is Your birth; earlier, prior was Vivaswat's birth. Therefore how am I to understand, how can I possibly know, that You of this age taught this Yoga at the beginning to Vivaswat, who belonged to ancient times?*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

वहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ ५ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

5. Many lives have I passed through as also yourself; I know them all, but you do not know them, O scorcher of foes.

To Arjuna, who thus questioned Him, the Blessed Lord, suggesting that He taught (Vivaswat) in a different form (body), said: *Many lives etc. Many lives have I, as also yourself passed through. I know them all, through My undecaying power of knowledge. But you do not know them, being enveloped by ignorance.*

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ६ ॥

6. Though I am birthless, immutable and the Lord of creatures, yet resorting to My Prakriti, I come into being through My own inscrutable power (Māyā).

It may be urged: But how can You who are beginningless have a birth? How, again, can (You) the Imperishable have repeated births so as to say, "Many lives have I passed through"? And how can You the Lord of the universe, who are free from virtue and sin, be born like the individual soul? To answer this the text says: *Though* etc. This is indeed so; yet, *though I am birthless*, likewise though I am *immutable*, of an imperishable nature, and also *the Lord*, not subject to Karma, *I come into being* perfectly with undiminished powers like knowledge, strength and prowess, *through My own inscrutable power (Māyā)*. It may be urged: Yet, how can You who have not got the subtle body consisting of sixteen parts (Kalās)<sup>1</sup> be born? To answer this the text says: *Resorting to*, adopting, (that

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<sup>1</sup> The sixteen parts are: The five organs of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five vital forces (Prānas) and the internal organ (Anthakarana or mind). The soul when it leaves a gross body, goes out with this subtle body and is reincarnated in another gross body. This goes on till its Karma is worked out, when this subtle body also is destroyed. So, without a subtle body to reside in, a soul cannot reincarnate itself. Hence the doubt. The Lord, not being subject to Karma, has no subtle body and consequently cannot take up a gross body.

aspect of) *My own Prakriti* which is made of pure Sattva, I incarnate Myself at My own will in a form made of pure and glorious Sattva (stuff).

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, righteousness declines and unrighteousness prevails, I manifest Myself.

Anticipating a question, 'When do You come into being?' the text says: *Whenever etc. Righteousness declines, decreases. Unrighteousness prevails, preponderates.*

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ ८ ॥

8. For the protection of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, - and for the establishment of religion, I come into being from age to age.

For what purpose (do You come into being)? To answer this the text says: *For the protection etc.*

*For the protection of the righteous, i.e., those who are engaged in their duties; for the destruction, slaying, of the wicked, i.e., those who commit vile acts; and in this way for the establishment of religion, to make religion invulnerable by the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked, I come into being from age to age, on particular occasions. But though I am engaged in thus chastising the wicked, do not think I am cruel. As it is said: "As the mother's chastising a child in bringing it up, is not cruelty towards it, even so is the (action) of the Lord, who is the regulator of good and evil."*

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ ९ ॥

9. He who thus knows truly My divine birth and work, is no more born after death; he attains Me, O Arjuna.

The result of knowing the birth and work of the Lord which are of this nature is being stated: *He who* etc. *He who knows truly*, that it is for the good of others alone, *My divine*, supernatural, *birth*, which is due to My free will and work, consisting in the protection of religion,—*he*, giving up attachment for the body, *is no more born*, does not attain rebirth, but *attains Me* alone.

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ १० ॥

10. Free from attachment, fear and anger, with their minds intent on Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by knowledge and penance, many have attained My Being.

It may be urged: How can one attain You through the knowledge of (Your) birth and work? This is being answered: *Free from* etc. Those who, coming to know of My extreme compassion that I through My incarnations of pure Sattva protect religion, are *free from attachment, fear and anger*, and who (thus), having no distraction, are *intent on Me*, have their minds fixed on Me, and take *refuge in Me* alone, being *purified*, freed from the dross of ignorance and its products *by knowledge and penance*, by the knowledge of the Self and by penance consisting in the performance of one's duty, that develops the knowledge, both of which are attained through My grace—here 'knowledge' and 'penance' form a Dvandva compound used as a singular—*many have attained My Being*, have been bodily united to My body. That is to say, this path of devotion is not inculcated newly.



In, "I know them all" (IV. 5) and the subsequent verses the Lord (Ishwara) and the individual soul (Jiva), having for their limiting adjuncts knowledge and ignorance respectively standing for the two entities 'That' and 'thou', (of the Vedic dictum 'That thou art'), have been pointed out. And because the Lord, being free from ignorance, is ever pure, and the individual soul is purified by casting off ignorance through knowledge attained by the grace of the Lord, it is understood that the identity of the two entities 'That' and 'thou' spoken of here is only in their aspect of pure Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ११ ॥

11. By whatsoever way men worship Me, even so do I accept them; for, in all ways, O Pārtha, men walk in My path.

Then is there partiality in You too, that You thus unite to Yourself those alone who take refuge in You and not others who are possessed of desires? To answer this the text says: *By whatsoever* etc.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ishwara and Jiva as such are not identical, but as Pure Consciousness, bereft of their limiting adjuncts—omniscience and ignorance respectively—they are identical. Otherwise the Jiva is always dependent on the Lord (Ishwara).

*By whatsoever way, method, men worship Me, be it either as possessed of desires or as free from them, even so i.e., by granting that wished for result, do I accept, bless, them. Do not think that I ignore those who, neglecting Me, worship only Indra and other gods. For in all ways, even the worshippers of Indra etc., walk in My path, the path of devotion to Me, alone, for I alone am worshipped even through Indra and other gods.*

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ १२ ॥

12. People seeking the fruit of actions worship the gods in this world; for in this world of men the fruit of action comes quickly.

It may be urged: Then why don't all worship You for attaining Liberation alone? This is being answered: *People seeking* etc. *People seeking the fruit of actions* generally worship Indra and other gods alone in this world of mortals, and not Me directly; *for the fruit of action comes* very soon, and not Liberation, which is the result of knowledge, as knowledge is hard to attain.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्वच्चर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The four castes were created by Me according, to differences in aptitudes and actions (of men). Though the author of them, know Me the immutable as non-agent.

Some perform action with desires and others without desires; thus there is difference in actions. And amongst the performers of these actions, the Brāhmanas and others, there are differences like superior, mediocre, etc. How can You who are the creator of (both) these differences be free from partiality? Apprehending such a doubt the text says: *The four castes* etc. The word Chāturvāṇyam means the four castes only, the affix 'Syang' denoting an identical meaning. This is the meaning: The Brāhmanas have a preponderance of the Sattva element and their duties are the control of the mind and the external organs etc. The Kshatriyas have Sattva plus a preponderance of Rajas, and their duties are courage, war, etc. The Vaishyas have the Rajas plus a preponderance of Tamas, and their duties are agriculture, trade, etc. The Sudras have a preponderance of Tamas. and their duty consists in service etc. to the other three castes. It is true that *the four castes were created by Me alone according to differences in aptitudes and actions* in the above manner. *Though I am thus the author of them, yet in actuality know Me as*

*non-agent*, the reason being that I am *immutable*, imperishable, being free from attachment.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।

इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ १४ ॥

14. Actions do not touch Me, nor have I any desire for their fruit—he who knows Me thus, is not bound by actions.

That very thing (non-attachment) is being shown: *Actions* etc. *Actions* like even the protection etc. of the universe *do not touch Me*, do not make Me attached, for I am free from egoism, and having had all My desires fulfilled, have no desire for the fruit of actions. Where is the need of saying that I am not touched by them when even *he who knows Me* to be free from the desire for the fruit of actions *is not bound by actions*, for he who knows that the cause of My being untouched (by action) is the absence of egoism and desires etc., has his egoism etc. also loosened.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वं पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. Thus knowing, even the ancient seekers of Liberation performed work of

yore. Therefore perform work alone done by the ancients.

In the four verses beginning with, "By whatsoever way men worship Me" etc., (11) having refuted partiality in God, a topic which was raised by the way, (the Lord), in order to propound the way of action already mentioned, reminds by saying, *Thus knowing, etc. Knowing that work done without egotism does not bind, the ancient seekers of Liberation like Janaka performed work of yore even in former ages for the purification of the mind. Therefore you too first perform work alone.*

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६ ॥

16. Even the wise are deluded as to what is action and what is inaction. I shall expound to you that action knowing which you will be free from all ills.

That (action) also should be performed after discussion with the knowers of Truth and not merely according to the popular view. This is being stated: *Even the wise etc. Even men of discrimination are deluded as to what is action, of what nature is the doing of actions, and what is inaction, of what nature*

is the non-performance of actions. Therefore *I shall expound to you that action and inaction knowing and practising which, you will be free from all ills, from this transmigratory existence, i.e., will attain Liberation. Listen.*

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७ ॥

17. There is (something) to know about prescribed action and about action that is prohibited, as also about inaction; the way of action is mysterious.

It may be urged: But it is well known that bodily activity and so forth is action, and the absence of that is inaction. Therefore how do You say that even the wise are deluded in this matter? To answer this the text says: *There is* etc. *There is (something) to know about prescribed action*, the real nature of activities that are enjoined by the Scriptures—action is not merely what is commonly known as such—*and about inaction*, the true nature of the non-performance of action, as also *about action that is prohibited*, the true nature of forbidden action; for *the way of action is mysterious*. Here action implies inaction and prohibited action also. That is to say, the way of action, inaction, and prohibited action is mysterious.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥

18. He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise amongst men; he is poised and a performer of all actions.

Showing the incomprehensibility of action etc. it is being stated: *He who* etc. *He who sees inaction in action* done as worship of the Lord, i.e., who sees that such work is no action, since, leading to knowledge, it has no binding effect, *and he who sees action in inaction*, in the non-performance of prescribed action, for, resulting in sinfulness, it leads to bondage, *he amongst men who perform action is wise*, superior, owing to his having settled conviction. Such a person is being praised: *He is poised*, a Yogi, for that action (done for the Lord) leads to the way of knowledge; *and he alone is a performer of all actions*, for in that action (done for the Lord), which is like a vast expanse of water (referred to in II. 46), the fruit of all other actions is included. Thus is clarified the way of action already spoken of in, "By not doing work" etc. (III. 4), for those desirous of attaining knowledge, but fit (as yet) only for the way of action. As this section elucidates that, it is not a repetition classed as a defect. It should be noted that this very statement also incidentally



expounds the redundance of action after knowledge is attained, as stated in, "But that person who delights only in the Self" etc. (III. 17).

The verse can also be interpreted to mean: When action does not bind even one who is (merely) an aspirant after knowledge, then how could it bind one who has attained knowledge? *In action*, even when the body and the senses are active, *he who*, experiencing the Self as different from the body etc., *sees only inaction*, the natural inactivity of the Self; likewise *he who sees action in inaction*, divorced from knowledge, i.e., in actions renounced from a sense of their troublesomeness, for this renunciation is an obstruction to the attainment of knowledge, being hypocritical—as it has been stated in: "Controlling the organs of action, he who keeps dwelling" etc. (III. 6)—he who is like this (i.e., who sees inaction in action etc.) *is wise*, a learned man, *amongst all men*. The reason for this is: Though *a performer of all actions*, like eating, that come of their own accord, *he is indeed poised*, absorbed in Samādhi, owing to his knowledge of the Self as a non-agent. Just on account of this, if a man of knowledge takes meat of an animal killed by a poisoned arrow, which he has got without any effort on his part, he does no wrongful act, but if an ignorant man does it through desire, it is sinful. It should be noted that by this the nature of prohibited action also is explained.

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्मणि तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ १९ ॥

19. He whose actions are all free from the hankering for desires, whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge, him the wise call a sage.

The twofold meaning based on scriptural import and presumption (Arthāpatti) respectively in "He who sees inaction in action" etc, is clarified in the five verses beginning with, *He whose* etc. Those that are well undertaken are called 'Samārambha' i.e., actions. *Desires* (Kāma), things that are desired, i.e., the results of action. *He whose actions are free from the hankering* for these, him they call a sage. The reason for that is: For his actions have been burnt, turned into non-actions, by the fire of knowledge that is kindled when the mind is purified by those actions. As applying, however, to one who has attained knowledge, the verse may be interpreted thus: *He whose actions are free from the desire* for results, and from the hankering for action, viz., such and such action has to be done for that purpose. The rest is clear.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ २० ॥

20. Renouncing the attachment for action, and its fruit, ever contented, and without any refuge, he does not do anything, even though engaged in action.

Further, *Renouncing* etc. *Renouncing*, giving up, *attachment for action and its fruit*, he who is *ever contented* with his own bliss, and therefore who has nothing to depend on for the purpose of acquisition or preservation—such a person, *though well engaged in action*, either natural or prescribed, *does not do anything*, that is to say, his actions are turned into non-actions.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Bereft of desire, controlled in mind and body, with all possessions relinquished and doing merely bodily action, he does not get tainted.

Further, *Bereft* etc. *Bereft of desire*, he from whom all desire is gone, whose *mind and self*, i.e., the *body*, are *controlled*, subdued, any by whom *all possessions* have been *relinquished*—such a person *though doing merely bodily action*, *though doing*

action accomplished merely by this body without the consciousness of agency, *does not get tainted*, does not get bound. In the case of one who has attained knowledge it would mean: Though performing natural actions like going out for alms, which serve merely to maintain the body, he *does not get tainted*, does not incur sin by the non-performance of prescribed works.

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२ ॥

22. Contented with what chance brings, transcending the pair of opposites, free from jealousy, and unperturbed in success and failure, he is not bound even though performing actions.

Further, *Contented* etc. *Contented with what chance brings*, what comes of it own accord unsought, transcending, going beyond, *the pairs of opposites*, heat and cold etc; that is to say, one who is able to endure them. *Free from jealousy*, grudge. Who is *unperturbed*, free from joy or despondency, in the *success or failure* of even chance bringing anything (i.e., whether chance brings anything or not). Such a person, *even though performing actions*, those prescribed by the Scriptures for the first or second stages

according as he is an aspirant after knowledge or one who has attained knowledge, or natural actions, *is not bound*.

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३ ॥

23. He who is devoid of attachment, free, whose mind is established in knowledge, and who does work as a sacrifice (for the Lord)—his entire action melts away.

Further, *He who* etc. *He who is devoid of attachment*, i.e., who is desireless, *free* from attraction etc., *whose mind is established in knowledge*, and *who does work as a sacrifice*, i.e., *for the Lord*, his entire action, action together with its (resultant) impressions in the mind, *melts away*, becomes as good as non-action. In the case of a man who has attained knowledge, the words would mean: Who does work for the preservation of sacrifices, i.e., merely as an inducement to people.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ २४ ॥

others, again, offer sound and other objects of the senses in the fires of the senses.

*Others etc. Others, viz., the Brahmachāriṇs for life, offer as a sacrifice, dissolve, the ear and other senses in the fire of self-control regarding each particular sense. That is to say, restraining the senses, they predominantly lead a life of self-control. Others again, viz., the householders, offer sound and other objects of the senses as a sacrifice in the fires of the senses, i.e., being unattached even at the time of enjoying the sense-objects, they offer sound and other objects of the senses, imagined as oblations, into the senses, imagined to be the fires.*

सर्वाणोन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ २७ ॥

27. Others offer the functions of all the organs and Prāṇas in the fire of the Yoga of self-control lighted by knowledge.

*Others etc. Others, viz., the meditative, offer (as a sacrifice) the functions like hearing and seeing, of the organs of knowledge, viz., ears, eyes, etc.; the activities like talking, grasping, of the organs of action, viz., the tongue, hands, etc.; and the functions*

of the ten *Prānas* or vital forces, viz., exhaling of the *Prāna*; carrying downwards of the *Apāna*; contraction and expansion of the *Vyāna*; assimilation of food, drink, etc., of the *Samāna*; and leading upward (of the departing soul) of the *Udāna*. “*Nāga* has been spoken of as causing eructation and *Kurma* as opening the eyelids; *Krikara* should be known as producing hunger, *Devadatta* functions in yawning, and *Dhananjaya* permeates the whole body and does not leave even the dead.” In what (do they offer or dissolve these functions)? *In the fire of the Yoga of self control*: Control or concentration of the mind in the Self is *Yoga*, and that is the fire; in that fire—*lighted*, kindled, by the knowledge of the object of meditation (*Brahman*). That is to say, by knowing the object of meditation (*Brahman*) fully and concentrating the mind on that, they bring to rest all these functions.

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

28. There are others who sacrifice through gifts, others (again) who sacrifice through penance, and still others who sacrifice through *Yoga*; while there are others, aspirants of austere vows, who sacrifice through knowledge from scriptural studies.



Further, *There are etc. Others who sacrifice through gifts*, whose sacrifice consists in charity; *others who sacrifice through penance*, whose sacrifice consists in the performance of penances like the Krichchra and Chāndrāyana. Yoga is Samādhi (absorption) consisting in controlling the modifications of the mindstuff. Those who perform this as sacrifice are called Yogayajnas, or those *who sacrifice through Yoga*. Others *who sacrifice through knowledge from scriptural studies*, i.e., through a comprehension of the meaning of the Vedas acquired through hearing them and reasoning on them; or it may mean, two kinds of sacrifice, viz., that consisting in the study of the Vedas and that consisting in a comprehension of the meaning of the Vedas. *Aspirants*, those who preserve. *Of austere vows*, whose vows are well sharpened or very rigid.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेषानं तथाऽपरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ॥ २९ ॥

29. (Still) others, devoted to the control of the vital force (Prānāyāma), offer as a sacrifice the outgoing breath (Prāna) in the incoming (Apāna), as also the incoming breath in the outgoing, after restraining

the activity of the incoming and the outgoing breath. Others again, who regulate their food, offer as a sacrifice the functions of the senses in the senses.

Further, *(Still) others* etc. *Others offer as a sacrifice in the Apāna or incoming breath, the Prāna or the outgoing breath*, through inhaling, i.e., at the time of inhaling they unite the Prāna with the Apāna. Similarly, by Kumbhaka or *restraining the activity* of the outward and the inward motion of *the Prāna and Apāna* (respectively), he offers, at the time of exhaling, *the incoming breath (Apāna) as a sacrifice in the outgoing breath (Prāna)*. That is to say, through inhaling, holding the breath and exhaling in the above way, others are devoted to the *control of the vital force (Prāṇāyāma)*. Further, *Others again* etc. *Others again*, practising decrease of their food, imagine as a sacrifice the dissolution of *the functions of the senses in their respective senses*, as these are naturally getting weakened (for want of food). Or the line, “*(Still) others offer as a sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming as also incoming breath in the outgoing*”, may mean: They imagine reciprocally the identity of the entities ‘That’ and ‘thou’ (in the Vedic dictum ‘Thou art That’) through the mystic symbol ‘Hamsa’, which is manifested in the direct and inverse way as, ‘I am He’ (Aham sah) and ‘He is I’ (Sah aham), with each

inhaling and exhaling as the breathing process is repeated. As is stated in the Yoga Scriptures: "The breath is exhaled with (the syllable) 'Sah' and inhaled again with the syllable 'Ham', and one should meditate at the time thus: 'He is verily I', and 'I am He'."

Others say that in the verse, "Restraining the activity of the incoming and the outgoing breath" etc., however, *Prāṇāyāma*, the control of breath itself as a sacrifice is referred to. The interpretation of, "Others, who regulate their food" etc. is as follows: Those *who regulate their food* in accordance with texts such as "Two parts (of the stomach) should be filled with food, one part with water and the fourth part should be left over for air to move freely," etc.—they, *restraining the activity of the outgoing and incoming breath* by holding the breath, and being devoted to *the control of the vital force (Prāṇāyāma)*, offer as a sacrifice the *Prāṇas*, viz., the senses, in the *Prāṇa*, viz., the vital force. When the breath is held, all the vital forces merge in one (the vital force in the mouth), and they contemplate as a sacrifice this merging of the senses in that vital force. As is stated in the Yoga Scriptures: "To the extent that the mind becomes steady through constant practice, to that extent do the breath, speech, body, and gaze also become steady."

सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ ३० ॥

30. All these indeed are knowers of the sacrifices, purified of their sins through sacrifices.

Now is being stated the result accruing to the knowers of the twelve sacrifices mentioned above: *All these* etc. Yajñavidāh, that is, those, who have attained or accomplished the sacrifices; or it may mean: *Knowers of the sacrifices. Purified of their sins through sacrifices*, those who have destroyed their sins through the performance of sacrifices.

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Eating of the ambrosial food after the sacrifice, they attain the eternal Brahman. (Even) this world is not for the non-sacrificing, much less the other, O best of the Kurus (Arjuna).

*Eating* etc. Having performed the sacrifice, those who during the remaining time partake of food which is not prohibited (by the Scriptures) and which, therefore, is of ambrosial nature—they attain through knowledge *the eternal*, everlasting, *Brahman*. The defect in not performing sacrifices is being pointed out: *This world* etc. Even *this mortal world* of little happiness is not for the non-sacrificing, i.e., one who

does not perform sacrifices, *much less the other*, i.e., heaven. That is to say, sacrifices should therefore be performed in all possible ways.

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।

कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानिवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Thus various sacrifices are prescribed by the Vedas. Know all these to be born of action; knowing thus you will be free.

In order to praise the knowledge-sacrifice the sacrifices mentioned above are being concluded: *Thus etc. Sacrifices are propagated, are directly prescribed, by the Vedas. Yet, know all these to be accomplished by the activity of speech, mind, and body and to have no connection whatsoever with the reality of the Self, as the Self is beyond the range of action. Knowing thus, being devoted to knowledge, you will be free from the transmigratory existence.*

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ ३३ ॥

33. The sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifices performed with

materials, O scorcher of foes; all actions in their entirety, O Pārtha, are comprised in knowledge.

That the knowledge-sacrifice is superior to ritualistic sacrifices is being stated: *The sacrifice* etc. *The sacrifice through knowledge is superior to, higher than, sacrifices performed with materials, i.e., sacrifices to the gods etc. accomplished through the operation of things other than the Self.* Though the knowledge-sacrifice also is dependent on the activity of the mind, yet the knowledge that is identical with the Self only manifests itself in the modifications of the mind, and not a product of them; so it differs from the sacrifice performed with materials. The reason for the superiority is being stated: *All actions in their entirety, i.e., together with their fruit, are comprised, included, in knowledge.* For the Sruti says, "Whatever good work people do is all comprised in knowledge." (Chh. 4. 1. 4).

तेद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Acquire that through prostration, inquiry and service. The wise who are knowers of the Truth will instruct you in wisdom.

The means to this knowledge of the Self is being stated: *Acquire that etc. Acquire that*, attain that knowledge, *through prostration* before men of realization like a stick, and then by *inquiry*, by asking (them) questions like. "Whence is this relative existence of mine?", "How can it be ended?", and by *service*, by personal attendance (on them). *The wise*, those learned in the Scriptures, *knowers of the Truth*, those who also have intuitional experience (of the Reality), will help you to attain knowledge through instruction.

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।

येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Acquiring which, O son of Pāndu, you will no more be thus deluded; by which you will see all creatures in yourself and then in Me.

The fruit of knowledge is being stated: *Acquiring which etc. Acquiring*, attaining, *which* knowledge you will no more get deluded on account of the destruction etc. of relatives and so forth. The reason is being stated: *By which* knowledge you will see all creatures, fathers and sons, the creations of your own ignorance, *in yourself*, as identical with you. *And then* see yourself in Me, the supreme Self, as identical with Me.



अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Even if you be the worst sinner amongst all sinners, (yet) you will cross all sin by the boat of knowledge alone.

Further, *Even if etc.* *Even if you be a pre-eminent sinner amongst all sinners, yet, you will easily cross the ocean of all sin by the boat of knowledge alone.*

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Even as a blazing fire burns the fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, even so the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all actions.

To remove the misconception (likely to arise from the previous verse) that sin, remaining as it is like the ocean is only crossed and not destroyed, another example is being cited: *Even as etc.* *Even as a blazing fire burns the fuel, wood, to ashes, even so the fire of Self-knowledge burns to ashes all actions—except the Prārabdha work, that is.*

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ ३८ ॥

38. There is indeed nothing so purifying here as knowledge. One perfected in Yoga attains that, automatically in himself in time.

The reason for that is being given: *There is etc. Here, i.e., amidst penances, Yogas, etc., there is indeed nothing so pure, purifying, as knowledge.* Then why don't all strive for Self-knowledge alone? This is being answered in the next one and a half verse: *One perfected etc. That knowledge about the Self one attains automatically, without effort, in time, when through an intense practice of Karma-Yoga he becomes perfected, fit, and not without (the practice of) Karma-Yoga.*

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९ ॥

39. The man of faith, zeal, and self-control attains knowledge; having attained knowledge, he immediately attains supreme Peace.

Further, *The man of faith etc. The man of faith, one who believes in the teaching of the Guru of zeal, who is solely devoted to that (teaching), and of self-control, attains that knowledge and none else. Therefore, before one attains knowledge through the*

acquisition of faith etc., one has to follow the way of action alone for purification; but after knowledge is attained, there is nothing to be performed by him. This is being stated: *Having attained knowledge, he immediately attains supreme Peace, Liberation.*

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४० ॥

40. He who is ignorant, wanting in faith, and of a doubting mind is ruined; for the doubting man there is neither this nor the other world, nor happiness.

After describing a fit aspirant for knowledge, the opposite, an unfit aspirant, is being described: *He who* etc. *He who is ignorant*, who has not grasped the teaching of the Guru, or, though he may somehow have knowledge (of it), is *wanting in faith* in it; or, though he may have faith in it, is *of a doubting mind*, as to whether it would fructify in him or not—such a person is *ruined*, fails to reach his goal, of these three, again, *the doubting man* perishes in all respects, for he has *neither this world*, since acquisition of wealth, marriage, etc. are impossible for him, *nor has he the other world*, since he has not acquired any merit<sup>1</sup>, *nor happiness*, since owing to

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<sup>1</sup> As a result of performing his duties.

his very doubt enjoyment is an impossibility in his case.

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणि ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।

आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबद्धन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१ ॥

41. (But) he who has renounced (the fruit of) actions through Yoga, whose doubts have been destroyed by knowledge, and who is self-possessed, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), is not bound by actions.

The twofold devotion to Brahman, viz., through action and knowledge, taught in the (last) two chapters as the earlier and the later stage, is being concluded in the two verses beginning with: (*But he who* etc. *He who has renounced actions*, who has offered his actions to the Lord, *through Yoga* consisting in worship to Him, and therefore *whose doubts* in the form of ego-consciousness with respect to the body etc. *have been destroyed by knowledge*, by the consciousness of his being a non-agent, *and who is self-possessed*, alert, *is not bound by actions*, whether those done for the inducement of people or natural ones, through their results.

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।

छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, destroying this doubt born of ignorance of the Self and seated in the heart, with the sword of knowledge, take to Yoga and arise.

As it is so, *Therefore* etc. *Destroying this doubt* due to grief etc. *born of ignorance of the Self and seated in the heart, with the sword of knowledge*, i.e., discrimination between the Self and the body, *take to*, resort to, *Karma-Yoga*, which is a means to the knowledge of the supreme Self. And, as to that, first of all *arise* for the battle which has already been introduced. *O descendant of Bharata*, this form of address shows the righteousness of war (for Arjuna) as being a Kshatriya.

I bow to Sri Krishna, the destroyer of doubt, who has taught the twofold faith of action and knowledge according to differences in conditions etc. amongst men.

## CHAPTER V

### RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

अर्जुन उवाच ।

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said:

1. O Krishna, You teach renunciation of actions and again action; tell (me) decisively that one of the two which is good for me.

In the fifth chapter, the Lord, removing the doubt about the path of action and the renunciation of action, declares that Liberation is attained by the Sannyāsin who has conquered the senses.

It has been stated (in the previous chapter): "Therefore, destroying this doubt born of ignorance with the sword of knowledge, take to Yoga (Karma-Yoga)." *Arjuna* who thought this to be inconsistent with what was taught earlier, said: *O Krishna* etc. *You teach renunciation of actions* for the man of knowledge in, "But that person who delights only in the Self" etc. (III. 17) and "All

action in their entirety" etc. (IV.33). *Again* You teach *action* (Yoga) in "Destroying this doubt with the sword of knowledge take to Yoga (action)" (IV.42). It is not possible for the same person to practise simultaneously renunciation of action and its performance, as they are self-contradictory. Therefore, since one of these two is to be practised, tell (me) *decisively that one which is good for me.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Renunciation and the performance of (selfless) action both lead to Liberation; but of the two the performance of (selfless) action is superior to the renunciation of action.

The answer to it is being stated: *The Blessed Lord said: Renunciation* etc. This is the purport: I do not prescribe the way of action for the knower of the truth of the Self, which is known (only) through the Vedānta (texts), in which case it might contradict the renunciation of action taught earlier (for such a person); but I tell you, who think the



body to be the Self, to take to the Yoga of (selfless) action, which is a means to the knowledge of the supreme Self, by destroying this doubt caused by grief and delusion at the prospect of slaying the relations and so forth, with the sword of knowledge consisting in discrimination between the body and the Self. When, however, knowledge is attained by a person who has become pure-minded through the practice of selfless action, for the maturity of that knowledge the renunciation of action has been taught as an accessory to the way of knowledge. Such being the case, since option is not possible between two faiths one of which is subsidiary to the other, the chief one, *both renunciation and the performance of (selfless) action lead to Liberation only when practised by the same person according to the different stages of spiritual unfoldment. But, yet, of the two the performance of (selfless) action is superior to the renunciation of action.*

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

3. He who neither dislikes nor desires should be known as a perpetual renouncer of action; for, O mighty-armed one, one who is free from the dual throng is easily freed from bondage.

How (is the way of action superior)? To answer this, by praising the Karma-Yogin as a renouncer, his superiority is being shown: *He who* etc. He who being free from attachment and aversion etc., performs work for the sake of the Lord, *should be known as a perpetual renouncer of action*, that is, even at the time of performing work he should be regarded as such. The reason is: *For, one who is free from the dual throng*, the pairs of opposites like attachment and aversion, being pure-minded, *is easily freed from bondage*, viz., the worldly existence, through knowledge.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. The ignorant say that knowledge and (selfless) action are different, (but) not the wise; practising thoroughly even one, a person attains to the fruit of both.

As in this way both action and renunciation, one main and the other subsidiary, have to be practised in sequence according to the stage of spiritual development, the question as to which is superior, based on the assumption that the two are prescribed as alternatives, is indeed becoming of the ignorant and not of the discriminating. This is being stated:

*The ignorant etc.* The word 'knowledge', denoting the way of knowledge, here implies renunciation of action, which is an accessory to it. As both (selfless) action and renunciation give rise to the same result. *the ignorant, the unwise, alone say that they are different, independent of each other, but not the wise.* The reason being, *practising, resorting to, thoroughly even one, a person attains to the fruit of both.* For instance, practising the way of action well and thus becoming pure-minded, one attains through knowledge the fruit of both, viz., Liberation. Similarly, being well established in renunciation (of action), one attains Liberation, which is the fruit of both, it being also the indirect fruit of Karma-Yoga, practised earlier. Hence they do not produce separate results. This is the purport.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

5. That status which is attained by men of knowledge is also attained by men of (selfless) action; he sees (truly) who sees the way of knowledge and that of (selfless) action as one.

That is being clarified: *That status etc. That very status, viz., Liberation, which is attained directly by men of knowledge, by men devoted to the way of*

renunciation, the Sannyāsins, *is also attained by men of (selfless) action*, through knowledge. It should be understood that in the word 'Yoga' (in the original text) the suffix *ach*—as in words of the *arsas* group—denotes one who has (i.e. practises) Yoga. As the ways of knowledge and action have a common fruit, *he who sees them as one, alone sees truly.*

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।

योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ६ ॥

6. But renunciation of action, O mighty-armed one, is difficult to attain without performance of (selfless) action; the sage devoted to (selfless) action attains Brahman quickly.

If men of selfless action have finally to attain the stage of knowledge through renunciation of action, then one ought to renounce action from the very beginning. To those who think like this it is said in reply: *But renunciation etc. Renunciation of action is difficult, painful i.e., impossible, to attain without the performance of (selfless) action.* For the practice of knowledge is impossible without the Purity of mind. But *the sage who is devoted to (selfless) action*, being pure-minded, becomes a Sannyāsini and attains, knows intuitively, *Brahman quickly.* Therefore,

before purity of mind is obtained, what has been said before, viz., that the way of selfless action is superior to renunciation of action, holds good. As it has been said by the author of the Varttika: "One comes across Sannyāsins even, whose minds are externalized and thoughts polluted by fate, and who are careless, malicious and quarrelsome."

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।

सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

7. He who is devoted to (selfless) action (Yoga) and pure in mind, whose body and senses are under control, and whose Self has become the Self of all, is not touched even though he may be performing work.

Though through the way of (selfless) action etc., Brahman may have been attained, still work done after that might indeed lead to bondage. Apprehending such a doubt, the text says: *He who* etc., *He who is devoted to (selfless) action*, and hence who is *pure in self or mind*, and consequently *whose body is under control*, and therefore *whose senses too are under control*, and thus *whose Self has become the Self of all*—such a person, even though he may be

*performing work*, as an example to others, or just natural work, *is not touched*, is not bound by it.

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्चसन् ॥ ८ ॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

8-9. The man of selfless action, who knows the Truth, thinks, 'I am not doing anything,' even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, excreting, grasping, and opening and closing of the eyelids, believing that the senses rest in the sense-objects.

Lest the statement, "Even though performing work, he is not touched," be considered contradictory, it is being explained in the two verses beginning with, *The man of (selfless) action* etc., that as there is no consciousness of being an agent it is not contradictory. *The man of (selfless) action*, becoming gradually a knower of Truth, should think, i.e., thinks, 'I am not doing anything,' even while he is seeing, hearing, etc., believing, being firmly convinced,

*that the senses rest in the sense-objects.* Of these, *seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and eating* are the functions of the organs of knowledge, viz., the eyes etc.; *going* is the function of the legs; *sleeping*, of the mind; *breathing*, of the vital force; *speaking*, of the organ of speech; *excreting*, of the organs of excretion and generation; *grasping*, of the hands; *opening and closing of the eyelids*, of the vital force called Kurma. This is the distinction. Even performing all these actions, the knower of Brahman, being free from the idea of agency, is not tainted. As the Vedānta-Sūtra says: "When That (Brahman) is realized, (there result) the non-clinging and destruction of the subsequent and previous sins respectively, because it is (so) declared (by the Scriptures)" (B. S. 4. 1. 13).

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १० ॥

10. He who performs actions dedicating them to the Lord and giving up attachment, is not touched by sin, as a lotus leaf by water.

Then he who has the consciousness, "I am the doer", cannot help being tainted by action, and on account of his impure mind there is no renunciation



of action also for him; so it is a great fix! Apprehending such a doubt the text says: *He who etc. He who performs actions dedicating them to the Lord, offering them to the Lord, and giving up attachment for their fruit, is not touched by sin, by good and evil actions, which on account of their binding nature are most vicious, even as a lotus leaf, though remaining in water, is not wetted by it.*

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ११ ॥

11. Men of selfless action, giving up attachment, perform action through the body, mind, intellect as also the mere senses, for the purification of the mind.

After stating that such selfless actions do not bind, it is now being pointed out through approved usage that they lead to Liberation. *Men of selfless action, giving up attachment for the fruit of actions, perform action, like bathing through the body, (actions like) meditation through the mind, (actions like) ascertainment of the Reality through the intellect, as also (actions like) hearing and narrating (about the Lord) through the mere senses, i.e., through senses bereft of engrossment in action, for the purification of the self or mind.*

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ १२ ॥

12. The harmonised one, giving up the fruit of action, attains the highest peace; the non-harmonised one, working under the sway of desire, is attached to the fruit and gets bound.

How is it determined that by the same actions some people are bound while others are released? To answer this the text says: *The harmonized etc. The harmonized one, being devoted solely to the Lord and performing actions giving up their fruit, attains the highest peace, i.e., Liberation. But the non-harmonized or the externalised one, working under the sway of desire, being impelled to act by desire, is attached to the fruit and (so) gets completely bound.*

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।

नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The self-controlled embodied being, renouncing all actions through his mind, rests at ease in the city of nine gates (the body), neither acting nor causing to act.

Thus it has been expounded so far that for one who is without purity of mind, the way of selfless action is superior to renunciation of action. Now it is being stated that for the pure-minded person renunciation of action is the best: *The self-controlled* etc. *The self controlled*, one who has controlled his mind, *renouncing through his discriminative mind all actions* which distract at, *rests at ease*, devoted to knowledge. Where does he rest? This is being stated: *The embodied being rests in the city of nine gates*, in the body, which has got nine gates—seven in head, viz., the two eyes, the two nostrils, the two ears and the mouth, and two in the lower region, viz., the organs of excretion and generation—which is like a city, and with which he does not identify himself. Just because of the absence of identification, he *neither* acts himself through that body *nor* causes it to act, having no sense of ownership in it. Thus is he differentiated from the impure-minded person. For the latter, even after renouncing, acts and causes (the body) to act; but not so, however, this person. Therefore he rests at ease. This is the idea.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४ ॥

14. The Lord creates for this world neither agency nor actions nor the union with the fruit of actions; but nature acts.

But Sruti texts like, "He makes him whom He wishes to lift up from these worlds, do a good deed, and He makes him whom He wishes to degrade from these worlds, do a bad deed" (Kau. 3.8) show that it is by the Lord that a person is directed as a doer to acts resulting in good and evil. So how can he, being dependent, renounce such actions? If it be said that he would renounce good and evil actions, being directed to the path of knowledge by the Lord Himself, then, on account of partiality and cruelty, even the Lord, who is thus directing, will be subject to good and evil. Apprehending such a doubt the text answers it in the two verses beginning with: *The Lord* etc. *The Lord*, God, does not create *agency* etc., *for this world* of beings, but it is the individual soul's own *nature*, viz., ignorance, that *acts* as agent etc. The Lord engages in action the world of beings naturally disposed to activity through desire arising out of primeval ignorance, but does not Himself create agency etc.

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The omnipresent Lord does not accept the sin or virtue of anybody. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance; because of this beings get deluded.

As it is so, therefore the text says: *The omnipresent Lord* etc. *The Lord*, though He is the prompter, *does not accept*, partake of, *the sin or virtue of anybody*. The reason being, He is *omnipresent*, infinite, i.e., one whose desires are satisfied. If He had directed beings to actions out of selfish desire then He would have acquired sin and virtue. But He does not; for He, with His desires already fulfilled, directs beings according to their previous actions through His inscrutable power called *Mayā*.

But as He is seen to favour His devotees and punish non-devotees, there is partiality in Him; so, how can He be one whose desires are fulfilled? To answer this the text says; *Knowledge* etc. The *knowledge* that the Lord is the same to all is *enveloped by ignorance*, i.e., the failure to know that the Lord's chastisement also is His grace in the form of punishment. *Because of this beings get deluded*, that is to say, attribute partiality to the Lord.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. But those whose ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of the Self—their knowledge, like the sun, manifests that highest Being..

But men of knowledge do not get deluded. This is being stated: *But those etc. But those whose ignorance, which makes them see that partiality, has been destroyed by the knowledge of the Self, of the Lord, their knowledge, destroying their ignorance, manifests that highest Being, manifests the nature of the infinite Lord, even as the sun destroying darkness manifests all things.*

तद्वुद्ध्यस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Those who are decided on That, whose mind is set in That, who are devoted to That, and whose last resort is That, attain to non-return, with their sins winnowed off by knowledge.

The result of such worship of the Lord is being stated: *Those who etc. Those who are decided on That alone, i.e., who have a settled conviction about That, whose self or mind, is set in That alone, who are devoted to That alone, whose one aim is That, whose last resort, highest refuge, is That alone, and whose sins have been winnowed off by the knowledge of the Self attained through Its grace, attain to non-return, Liberation.*

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

18. The wise look with equal eye on a Brāhmana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste.

Of what kind are those wise people who attain non-return? It is being stated: *The wise* etc. Those who habitually see the same principle, Brahman, in things which are dissimilar, are *wise* men. Of these, the words, a *Brāhmana* endowed with learning and humility and an outcaste, lit., one who cooks a dog for his meal, show inequality with respect to conduct, and the words, a cow, an elephant, and a dog, show inequality of species.

इहैव तैजितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Even here is the relative existence conquered by them whose mind rests in equality; for Brahman is even and faultless, therefore are they established in Brahman.

But those who view equally things that are unequal do what is forbidden (by the Scriptures); so how can they be called wise? For Gautama says: "By worshipping equals and unequals with difference and equality respectively" etc. It means:



“When equals are honoured differently, and non-equals in the same way, the worshipper loses both this world and the next.” In answer to this the text says: *Even here* etc. *Even here*, in this very life, is creation, that which is created, i.e., *the relative existence, conquered, transcended*. By whom? *By them whose mind rests in equality*. The reason for this is: *For Brahman is even and faultless, therefore they who are even-sighted are established in Brahman*, have attained Brahmanhood. The demerit pointed out by Gautama is true only before one attains Brahmanhood; for the words, ‘By worshipping’ refer to the stage of worship (i.e., the person has not attained knowledge as yet).

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ २० ॥

20. The knower of Brahman who is established in Brahman, poised in mind and undeluded, is not elated on getting what is pleasant nor feels worried on getting what is unpleasant.

The characteristics of one who has attained Brahman are being stated: *The knower* etc. He who becoming a *knower of Brahman is established in Brahman*, should not be elated, i.e., *is not elated on*

*getting what is pleasant, nor should he feel worried, nor does he feel worried on getting what is unpleasant, because he is poised in mind. Whence is this poise? Because he is undeluded, free from delusion.*

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।

स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१ ॥

21. He whose mind is unattached to the external objects of the senses attains to the bliss that is in the self; he with his mind identified with Brahman through absorption in It, enjoys undecaying bliss.

The cause of the mental poise that results from the cessation of delusion is being stated: *He whose etc. Those that are touched by the senses are called Sparshā, i.e., the sense-objects. He whose mind is unattached to the external objects of the senses, attains to that serene bliss which is in the self, i.e., in the internal organ (mind), in the form of self-withdrawal. Having attained this bliss of self-withdrawal, he with his mind identified with Brahman through Yoga or absorption in it, enjoys undecaying bliss.*

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कीन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ २२ ॥

22. Enjoyments born of sense-objects are indeed the sources of misery; they have, O son of Kunti, a beginning and an end; the wise man does not rejoice in them.

But since Liberation leads to the cessation of the enjoyment of pleasing objects as well, how can it be a covetable end for man? That is being answered: *Enjoyments* etc. Things that are touched (by the senses) are called *Samsparsā*, i.e., sense-objects; *enjoyments*, pleasures, *born of sense-objects are indeed the sources of misery* even at the time of enjoyment, involving competition, jealousy, etc., and *they have a beginning and an end*. Therefore the discriminating person *does not rejoice in them*.

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ २३ ॥

23. He who is able to withstand the urge arising from passion and anger in this very life, before the fall of the body, is poised and a happy man.<sup>1</sup>

As Liberation is the highest aim of man, and as the urge of desire and anger is its great enemy, it is

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<sup>1</sup>The second construction given by the commentary is adopted in this version of the text.

only the man who is able to withstand it that attains Liberation. This is being said: *He who* etc. *He who is able to withstand*, to control, even here, i.e., even when it bubbles up, *the urge arising from passion and anger*, characterized by the agitation of the mind, the eyes, etc., and that also not for a moment, but till *the fall of the body*, i.e., till death, such a person alone is *poised*, concentrated, and *happy*, and none else. Or it may mean: Just as one bereft of life is able to withstand the urge of passion or anger, though (the body is) embraced by wailing young women or burnt by the sons and others after death, even so *he who* before death, i.e., even while living, *is able to withstand that urge*, is alone *poised and a happy man*. As has been said by Vashishtha: "The body, after life has departed from it, does not feel pleasure or pain. If it behaves like that when there is life in it, then it can contribute to Liberation."

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथाऽन्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ २४ ॥

24. He whose happiness is within, whose rejoicing is within and whose light is within, that Yogi, established in Brahman, attains mergence in Brahman.

One does not attain Liberation merely by subduing the urge of passion and anger; one has

other characteristics too: *He whose* etc. *He whose happiness is within*, in the Self alone and not in the sense-objects, *whose rejoicing or sport is within* and not outside, *and whose light or attention is within*, i.e., not directed to music, dance, etc.—such a person alone, getting established in Brahman, attains mergence or absorption, in Brahman.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।

छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Sages whose Sins have waned away, whose doubts have been dispelled, who have controlled their mind, and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, attain absorption in Brahman.

Moreover, *Sages* etc. *Sages*, men of true vision, *whose sins have waned away*, *whose doubts have been dispelled*, whose self or mind, is controlled, and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, i.e., compassionate,—they attain absorption in Brahman, i.e., Liberation.

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।

अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ २६ ॥

26. Sages who are free from passion and anger, who have controlled their mind,

and who have realized the Self, attain absorption in Brahman here and hereafter.

Further, *Sages etc., Sages or Sannyāsins, who are free from passion and anger, who have controlled their mind, and who have realized the Self,—attain absorption in Brahman here and hereafter*, lit. both ways, i.e., whether living or dead. That is to say, they merge in Brāhman not only after death but also while living.

स्पशन्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।

प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

27-28. Shutting out external sense-objects, fixing the gaze between the eye-brows, controlling the outgoing and incoming breaths that move through the nostrils, with the senses, mind and intellect restrained, and free from desire, fear and anger, the sage who has Liberation as his highest goal is indeed ever free.

In verses like, “That Yogi attains mergence in Brahman” etc. (V. 24) it has been declared that the Yogi attains Liberation. That Yoga is now described

in brief in the two verses beginning with: *Shutting out etc. External sense-objects*, viz., form, taste, etc., enter the mind when one thinks about them. *Shutting them out* by not thinking about them; *fixing the gaze between the eyebrows* only. If the eyes are fully closed, then the mind is lost in sleep, and if they are wide open it goes out (after objects); in order to avoid both these defects, the gaze is fixed between the eyebrows, keeping the eyes half closed; this is the idea. By *controlling the Prāna and Apāna that move up and down through the nostrils as the outgoing and incoming breaths*, i.e., holding the breath; or it may mean: Harmonising the Prāna and Apāna by breathing out and in gently so that the Prāna does not go out and the Apāna does not go in, but both move within the nostrils only; he who by this means (control of breath) has his *senses, mind and intellect restrained*, who has *Liberation alone as his highest goal*, and therefore who is *free from desire, fear and anger*—such a sage is indeed ever free, i.e., free even in this life.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ २९ ॥

29. Knowing Me, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and asceticism, the great Lord of all the worlds and the well-Wisher of all beings, one attains peace.



But how can one attain Liberation merely through the control of the senses etc., in this manner? To show that Liberation is attained not merely by that, but through knowledge, the text says: *Knowing Me* etc. *Knowing Me, the enjoyer* or protector, at My free will, *of all sacrifices and asceticism* offered by My devotees, *the great Lord of all the worlds, the well-wisher of all beings*, i.e., one who does good disinterestedly, or the Inner Ruler, *one attains peace*, Liberation, through My grace.

I bow down to that omniscient Hari (Lord) who thus removed the doubt about an option between knowledge and (selfless) action and prescribed their combination in sequence.

## CHAPTER VI THE WAY OF CONTEMPLATION

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्रिर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. He who does the prescribed work without caring for its fruit, is a Sannyāsi as also a Yogi, and not he who is without the (sacred) fire and without action.

Even though the mind be purified, yet without meditation Liberation cannot result from mere renunciation (of action); hence the Yoga of meditation is expounded in this sixth (chapter).

In order to explain in detail the Yoga referred to in brief at the end of the last chapter, the sixth chapter is begun. As the practice of knowledge preceded by renunciation of action has been depicted there as the main theme in the verses beginning with, "The self-controlled, embodied being, renouncing all actions through his mind" etc. (V. 13), and as performance of work is painful, lest one should commit the mistake of suddenly

renouncing action *the Blessed Lord*, in order to prevent such a contingency, *said*, praising the way of action as superior to renunciation, in the two verses beginning with: *He who* etc. *He who does the work prescribed* as obligatory, *without caring for or desiring its fruit, he is a Sannyāsi as also a Yogi, and not he who is without the (sacred) fire*, i.e., who has renounced sacrificial rites called *Ishta* performed in the (sacred) fire, *and without action*, i.e., who has given up the philanthropic acts called *Purta*, performed without the aid of any fire.

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

2. Know that which is extolled as Sannyāsa, to be Yoga, O Pāṇḍava (Arjuna). Verily, no one becomes a Yogi without renouncing desire for the fruit of action.

Why is he a Sannyāsin and a Yogi? To answer this the text, establishing that Karma-Yoga is the same thing as renunciation (of action and its fruit), says: *Know that* etc. *Know that which is extolled*, spoken highly of, *as Sannyāsa*—witness *Sruti* texts like, “Sannyāsa alone excels everything” (*Mahā Nārāyaṇa* 21.2)—*to be Yoga* itself, owing to the mere renunciation of the fruit (of action). Why should it be known as such? Because the reason referred

to by the word 'as' (इति) in the verse, is found in (Karma-) Yoga also. So it is said: *Verily, no one* etc. *Verily, no one* who has not renounced the *desire for the fruit (of action)*, be he devoted to action or knowledge, *becomes a Yogi*. Therefore owing to the common factor,<sup>1</sup> viz., the renunciation of the desire for the fruit (of action) he is a Sannyasin, and just because this very renunciation of the desire for the fruit (of action), removes all mental distractions,<sup>2</sup> he verily becomes a Yogi also. This is the meaning.

आरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

3. For the sage who desires to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means; and for him alone, when he has attained to Yoga, inaction is said to be the means.

In that case one will have to practise Karma-Yoga all through life? Apprehending such a doubt, the text sets a limit to it: *For the sage* etc. *For the person who desires to attain to the Yoga of*

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<sup>1</sup> In Sanhyāsa one renounces the desire for the fruit of action as well as action itself. But in Karma-Yoga one renounces only the desire for the fruit of action. So the renunciation of the desire for the fruit of action is a common factor in both, and by this similarity Yoga is said to be the same as Sanhyāsa.

<sup>2</sup> According to Patanjali's Yoga system.

knowledge, *action is said to be the means to attain that, because it purifies the mind. But for him alone, when he has attained to the Yoga of knowledge, and is devoted to meditation, inaction, absorption, the cessation of all activity that distracts meditation, is said to be the means for the maturity of knowledge.*

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।

सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४ ॥

4. When one habitually renounces all desires and is no more attached either to sense-objects or to actions, then one is said to have attained to Yoga.

What is this person like, who has attained to the Yoga (of knowledge)—for whom inaction is prescribed as a means? That is being stated: *When one etc. When one is no more attached either to sense-objects like sound which are enjoyed by the senses, or to actions which are means to them, the reason for that being that he is one who habitually renounces, gives up, all desires for objects of enjoyment and action, which desires are the root cause of all attachment—then one is said to have attained to Yoga.*

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥

5. One should raise oneself through the self, and never lower oneself; for the self alone is one's friend and the self alone is one's enemy.

Therefore realizing that non-attachment to sense-objects leads to Liberation and attachment to them causes bondage, proneness to attachment etc. has to be renounced. So it is being said: *One should etc. Through the self* endowed with discrimination *one should raise oneself* from the transmigratory existence, *and never lower, debase, oneself; for, the self alone* freed from attachments of the mind *is one's friend, benefactor, as also one's enemy, malefactor.*

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. To him who as conquered the self (body and senses) by his self, the self is his friend; for the uncontrolled man, however, the self alone is adverse like an enemy.

To what sort of a person is the self itself a friend and to what sort of a person is the self itself an enemy? To answer this the text says: *To him etc. To him who has conquered, brought under control, the self, this aggregate of the body and the senses, by his self,—to such a person, verily,*

*the self is his own friend. For the uncontrolled man, however, the self alone is adverse to itself, is harmful, like an enemy.*

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ ७ ॥

7. The self of one who is self-controlled and serene is alone poised in heat and cold, happiness and misery, as also in honour and dishonour.

The friendliness of the self-controlled person to himself is elucidated: *'the self etc. The self of one who is self-controlled and serene, free from attachment etc., is alone poised, steadfast in the (real) Self, even in the presence of heat and cold etc., and not of any other person; or it may mean: The supreme Self of such a person is (truly) established in his heart.*

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८ ॥

8. The Yogi whose self is satisfied through knowledge and realization, who is steady and has the senses under control, and to whom a clod of earth, a stone and gold are of equal value, is said to be steadfast.



The characteristics and superiority of one who has attained to Yoga, which have already been mentioned are being concluded after substantiation: *The Yogi* etc. *Knowledge* (Jñāna) is that which is gained from instruction and Vijnāna is intuitive realization; he whose self, mind, is satisfied, bereft of craving, through these, and therefore who is steady, free from agitation, and consequently who has the senses under control, and therefore to whom a clod of earth and the rest are equal, i.e., who has no idea with respect to a clod of earth, a stone and gold, that they should be rejected or acquired, is said to be steadfast, to have attained to Yoga.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९ ॥

9. He excels, who looks equally on a well-wisher, a friend, an enemy, a neutral, an arbiter, a hateful person, a relative and also on the good and the sinful.

But he who looks equally on a well-wisher, friend, etc., is superior even to him (one who has attained to Yoga). So it is being said: *He excels* etc. *Well-wisher*, one who by nature is well-disposed. *Friend*, one who does good through affection. *Enemy*, one who does harm. *Neutral*, one who is

indifferent to both the contending parties. *Arbiter*, one who is a well-wisher of both these parties. *A hateful person*, an object of aversion. *A relative*, kinsman. *The good*, those who are of good behaviour. *The sinful*, those who are of bad conduct. *He who looks equally on these*, whose mind is free from attachment or aversion etc., with respect to these, indeed *excels*.

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १० ॥

10. The Yogi, with his mind and self (body) subjugated, free from desire, destitute and living alone in solitude, should constantly concentrate his mind.

Having thus stated the characteristics of one who has attained to Yoga, the text now goes on to describe the Yoga with its parts with reference to him, in the verses beginning with, "The Yogi" etc., and ending with, "That Yogi is considered as the best" (32). *The Yogi*, or one who has attained to Yoga, *should constantly*, always, *concentrate his self or mind, living in solitude*, in a sequestered place, *alone*, free from company, *with his mind and self, body, subjugated, free from desire*, craving or taking no food, and *destitute*, free from possessions.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२ ॥

11-12. In a clean spot fixing his seat firm, neither too high nor too low, made of the Kusha grass, skin and cloth one on top of the other—sitting on that, with the activities of the mind and the senses controlled, concentrating his mind, he should practise Yoga for the purification of the mind.

The rule regarding the seat is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *In a clean spot* etc. *In a clean spot fixing his seat*—what kind of seat? *Firm, neither too high nor too low*, in which seat are spread a cloth and a tiger's or any other skin over the Kusha grass—over the Kusha grass the skin and on that a cloth,—*sitting on that seat, concentrating his mind, making it free from distractions, he should practise Yoga, with the activities of the mind and the senses controlled, for the purification of the self, for attaining tranquility of the mind.*

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ १३ ॥

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ॥ १४ ॥

13-14. Holding the trunk, head and neck erect and steady, becoming firm, fixing the gaze on the tip of his nose and not looking around, tranquil in mind, fearless, practising continence, controlling the mind, intent on Me, he should sit absorbed having Me as the supreme goal.

The pose of the body etc., that is helpful to concentration of the mind is being described in the two verses beginning with: *Holding* etc. By 'body' is meant the trunk. *Holding the trunk, neck and head*, i.e., (the upper part of the body) from the Mulādhāra or sacral plexus to the head, *erect*, not bent, *and steady*, motionless, *becoming firm*, resolute, *fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose*, i.e., keeping the eyes half open, *and not looking around*—this is to be construed with 'he should sit' in the next verse (13).

*Tranquil* etc. He whose self or mind is *tranquil*, whose fear is gone, observing the vow of Brahmacharya, i.e., *practising continence*, *controlling*, withdrawing, *the mind*, whose mind is *intent on Me* alone and to whom I am the *supreme Goal*—being thus *absorbed*, he should sit, remain (14).

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ १५ ॥

15. Thus constantly concentrating the mind, the Yogi, with his mind controlled, attains the peace culminating in final Beatitude in the form of abiding in Me.

The fruit of Yoga practice is being stated: *Thus* etc. *Thus*, in the above mentioned manner, *constantly concentrating the self, mind, with his mind controlled*, he attains the *peace*, the cessation of this worldly existence. What kind of peace? The *Peace culminating in*, the goal of which is, *final Beatitude*, which consists in *abiding in Me*.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।

न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ १६ ॥

16. Yoga is not attained by one who eats too much or who eats nothing at all, nor by him who sleeps too much or who keeps awake (too much), O Arjuna.

The rules with respect to food etc., to be observed by one practising Yoga are being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Yoga* etc. By him *who eats too much* or even by him *who eats nothing at*

*all, Yoga, perfect concentration of mind, is not attained. So also by him who sleeps too much or by him who keeps awake too much, Yoga is not attained.*

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ १७ ॥

17. He who is moderate in food and movements, in his engagement in actions, and in sleep and wakefulness, attains to Yoga which destroys misery.

What kind of a person, then, attains to Yoga? It is being stated: *He who etc. Who is moderate, restrained, in food and movements, and whose engagement in actions, in work, is moderate, restrained, and who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness, attains to Yoga which destroys misery.*

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ १८ ॥

18. When the mind, well-controlled, remains fixed in the Self alone, and one is free from craving for all enjoyments, then one is said to have attained Yoga.

When does a person attain Yoga? To answer this the text says: *When etc. When the mind, being well-controlled, remains fixed in the Self alone, and when, moreover, one is free from craving, desire, for all*

*enjoyments, here and hereafter, then one is said to have attained Yoga.*

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Even as a lamp placed in a place free from any breeze does not flicker—this is the simile for a Yogi of controlled mind, practising concentration on the Self.

An illustration of the mind resting absorbed in the Self is being given: *Even as etc. Even as a lamp placed in a place free from any breeze does not flicker—this is the simile, example—with respect to whom?—for a Yogi of controlled mind, practising concentration on the self.* That is to say, his mind rests steady and bright like that flame.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ २० ॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१ ॥

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२ ॥

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३ ॥



20-23. That state in which the mind controlled by the practice of concentration gets settled; in which seeing the Self by the (purified) mind one is satisfied with the Self; in which one realizes same absolute, transcendent bliss which is experienced through the intellect; established in which one does not waver from the Truth; attaining which one thinks of no other acquisition as greater than that; and established in which, one is not perturbed even by great pain—that, one should know, is designated as Yoga, untouched by all contact with pain. That Yoga should be practised with conviction and without depression of spirits.

In, "Know that which is extolled as Sannyāsa, to be Yoga" etc. (VI. 2), it is action that was meant by the word Yoga; whereas in, "Yoga is not attained by one who eats too much" etc. (VI. 16), perfect concentration (Samādhi) was meant by that word. What, then, is the primary meaning of the word Yoga? In answer to such a question, the text, defining perfect concentration both by its characteristic and result, shows that to be the primary meaning of the word 'Yoga' in the three verses and

a half beginning with: *That state* etc. *That particular state in which the mind controlled by the practice of concentration gets settled* (is designated as Yoga). By this the primary characteristic of Yoga is stated. As Patanjali's (Yoga) Sutra defines it: "Yoga is the control of the modifications of the mind-stuff." The same thing (viz. concentration) is defined also by its result, viz., the attainment of what is desired. *In which particular state one sees the Self alone and not the body etc., by the self or purified mind and seeing It one is satisfied with the Self alone and not with the sense-objects.* The word 'which', in all these clauses, viz., 'in which', etc., agrees with, 'that, one should know, is designated as Yoga' occurring in the fourth of these verses (20).

The reason for satisfaction in the Self alone is being stated; *In which* etc. *In which particular state one realizes some unsurpassed absolute, everlasting, bliss.* But at that time there is no contact with sense-objects, so how can there be bliss? This is being answered: *Transcendent*, independent of all contact between the senses and their objects,<sup>1</sup> and *which is experienced through the intellect alone* that has taken the form of the Self. And therefore *established in which one does not waver from the Truth*, from the reality of the Self (21).

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<sup>1</sup> This bliss is not a product of the contact of the senses with their objects, and hence it is said to transcend the senses.

The non-wavering is being substantiated: *Attaining which* etc. *Attaining which* acquisition, viz., *as greater than that*, that itself being infinite bliss, *and established in which, one is not perturbed*, overcome, *by great pain* like heat and cold etc. It is to be noted that by this result also, viz., the cessation of all untoward things, Yoga is defined (22).

That particular state which is of this nature is named in the half-verse: *That* etc. The word *pain* includes the pleasure derived from sense-objects, since it is mixed with pain. That particular state which is *untouched by all contact*, even the least connection, *with pain, that, one should know, is called Yoga*, is the meaning of the word 'Yoga'. The union of the embodied self with the supreme Self is called Yoga. Or the clause may mean: Yoga may be defined by a negative characteristic as 'the absence of all contact with pain', even as the word 'timid' is used with respect to the brave.<sup>1</sup> But the application of the word 'Yoga' to mean action (in 'Karma-Yoga') is only figurative, it being a means to Yoga—this is the idea. As Yoga yields such a great result, that alone should be practised with diligence. This is being stated in the next verse and a half beginning with: *That Yoga* etc. *That Yoga should be practised with conviction* resulting

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<sup>1</sup> 'The brave' means those who are free from all cowardice or timidity.

from the teachings of the Scriptures and the preceptor. Though it may not fructify soon, yet it should be practised *without depression of spirits*. Lukewarmness in practice due to difficulties is depression (23).

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानिषेधतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४ ॥

24. Having completely renounced all desires born of fancy, controlling well the senses from all sides by the mind alone, (Yoga should be practised).

Further, *Having renounced* etc. *Having renounced all desires* which are *born of fancy* and are obstructions to the attainment of *Yoga completely*, i.e., together with the (latent) impressions (in the mind), *controlling well the senses* wandering in all directions *by the mind alone*, accustomed to see the dark side of sense-objects, "Yoga should be practised"—this is the construction. The words are supplied from the previous verse.

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५ ॥

25. One should withdraw by degrees, establishing the mind in the Self by the

intellect regulated by concentration, and should not think of anything else

If the mind should waver owing to the latent impressions, of past actions, then it should be made steady by concentration (Dhāraṇā). Therefore it is being stated: *One should etc. By the intellect regulated, controlled, by concentration, establishing the mind completely in the Self, i.e., making it steady in the Self alone, one should withdraw.* That also *by degrees*, by gradual practice, and not all on a sudden. The nature of the withdrawal is being stated: *He should not think of anything else.* Having become one with the supreme Spirit manifesting spontaneously in the tranquil mind, one should desist even from the meditation on the Self.<sup>1</sup> This is the sense.

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।

ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ २६ ॥

26. Wheresoever the restless and unsteady mind wanders, from that very object it should be restrained and brought under the control of the Self alone.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, all mental waves should be avoided, and the mind made absolutely placid. Even the mental state that presents the Self as an object meditated upon and something different from the person meditating, should be avoided.

Even after that has been done, if the mind should waver through the influence of *Rajas* (activity), then it should be again brought under control through self-withdrawal. So it is being stated: *Wheresoever* etc. After whatever object the *unsteady mind*, which by nature is *restless* goes out, although controlled, *from that very object it should be withdrawn and steadied in the Self alone.*

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ २७ ॥

27. To this Yogin whose activity (*Rajas*) has subsided, who is of a tranquil mind, sinless and identified with Brahman, comes supreme bliss.

To one who thus again and again brings the mind under control through self-withdrawal etc., the bliss of Yoga comes when the spirit of activity (*Rajas*) has been exhausted. So it is being stated: *To this Yogin* etc. To him whose activity (*Rajas*) has subsided in the above-mentioned way, and, therefore whose mind is tranquil—to this sinless Yogi who has attained the Brahmanhood, comes of its own accord the supreme bliss, the bliss of perfect absorption (*Samādhi*).

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं यो गोविगतकल्मषः ।

मुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ २८ ॥

28. The Yogi entirely free from taint, constantly controlling the mind thus, attains easily the infinite bliss of union with Brahman.

Then he becomes blessed. This is being stated: *The Yogi* etc. *The Yogi, constantly controlling the self, mind, thus, in the above manner, and is entirely, absolutely, free from taint, attains easily, without any effort, union with Brahman, the realization that destroys ignorance, which itself is infinite or supreme bliss. That is to say, he attains 'Liberation even while living'.*

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ २९ ॥

29. The man whose mind is absorbed through Yoga and who sees the same (Brahman) everywhere, sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.

That realization of Brahman is being described: *The man* etc. *The man whose mind is absorbed through Yoga, who is self-composed through the practice of Yoga, and who sees the same Brahman alone everywhere, sees his Self bereft of all limitations like the body which are the products of ignorance, existing in all beings, from Brahma down to inanimate objects,*



and sees these things *in the Self* as non-different from it.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

30. He who sees Me everywhere and sees all things in Me, does not lose sight of Me, nor do I of him.

Worshipping Me as the Self of all beings is the chief means to realization of the Self. This is being stated: *He who* etc. *He who sees Me*, the supreme Lord, *everywhere*, in every being, *and sees all*, every being, *in Me*, *does not lose sight of Me*, *nor do I of him*. This is to say, manifesting Myself before him and looking at him graciously I favour him.

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमांस्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१ ॥

31. He who worships Me residing in all beings in a spirit of unity, becomes a Yogi and, whatever his mode of life, lives in Me.

Such a person (as mentioned in the last verse) is not subject to any (scriptural) injunctions. This is being stated: *He who* etc. *He, who worships Me*,

who am in all beings, in a spirit of unity, i.e., practising non-difference, becomes a *Yogi*, a man of realization, and, whatever his mode of life, i.e., even though he should renounce all ritualistic work, lives in *Me* alone, i.e., liberated and not degraded.

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२ ॥

32. He who by comparison with himself looks upon the pleasure and pain in all creatures as similar—that *Yogi*, O Arjuna, is considered the best.

Amongst those *Yogis*, again, who worship *Me* thus, he who is compassionate to all beings excels. This is being stated: *He who* etc. *He who by comparison with himself looks upon the pleasure and pain in all creatures as similar*, i.e., feels: "Even as pleasure pleasing to me and pain disagreeable, so are they to others also," and therefore who wishes only pleasure to all creatures and not pain to any being, *that Yogī is the best* in My opinion.

अर्जुन उवाच ।

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ ३३ ॥

Arjuna said:

33. For this Yoga that you have described as equanimity, O slayer of Madhu (Sri Krishna), I do not see any permanence, owing to restlessness (of the mind).

*Arjuna, who thought the attainment of such Yoga to be impossible, said: For this Yoga etc. For this Yoga that you have described as equanimity, resting of the mind absorbed in the Self, being free from stupor or distraction. I do not see any permanence, continuance for a long time, owing to restlessness of the mind.*

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ३४ ॥

34. For the mind, O Krishna, is restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate; I think it is extremely difficult to control like the wind.

This statement is being elucidated further: *For the mind etc. Restless*, by nature fickle. Also *turbulent*, capable of agitating the body and the senses. Moreover, it is *strong*, hard to control even by discrimination. Further, it is *obstinate*, i.e., being bounded by attachment for sense-objects, is

difficult to pierce through. Therefore, just as it is impossible to confine within a pot, *the wind* that is blowing hither and thither in space, even so *I think it is extremely difficult*, altogether impossible to control, restrain, that mind.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ३५ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

35. Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed one (Arjuna), the mind is restless and hard to control; yet by practice and dispassion, O son of Kunti, it is controlled.

Accepting what has been said about the restlessness etc., *the Blessed Lord said* regarding the means of controlling the mind: *Undoubtedly* etc., Your statement that owing to restlessness etc., it is impossible to control the mind, is quite true. *Yet by practice*, by repetition of the mental states in the form of the Self to the exclusion of sense-objects and by *dispassion* for the latter, *it is controlled*, restrained. Being free from the obstacles, stupor and distractions, through constant practice and dispassion respectively, the mind, with the modifications at rest, remains absorbed in the supreme

Self (Paramātman). This is the idea. As it is said in the Yoga Scriptures: "The resting of the mind in the form of Brahman, free from all modifications, is what this called the Asamprajnāta (Nirvikalpa) Samādhi."

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६ ॥

36. For one whose mind is not controlled, I consider Yoga is hard to attain; but it is attainable by one whose mind is under control and who strives through (the prescribed) means.

But this much is certain in this matter: *For one etc. For one whose self, mind is not controlled through practice and dispassion as described above, Yoga is hard, impossible, to attain. But Yoga is attainable by one whose self, mind, is under control through practice and dispassion, and who again strives through this very means.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ ३७ ॥

Arjuna asked:

37. He who, though endowed with faith, strives not, and whose mind wanders

from Yoga—failing to attain the fruition of Yoga, what goal, O Krishna, does a person attain?

What goal does one reach who somehow has failed to attain realization for want of practice and dispassion? This *Ārjuna* asked: *He who* etc. *He who* at the outset takes to Yoga *endowed with faith* and not hypocritically, but who later *strives not*, does not put in proper effort, i.e., is slack in practice; and *whose mind wanders from Yoga*, i.e., is inclined towards sense-objects, in other words, one of indifferent dispassion; thus owing to slackness of practice and dispassion, *failing to attain the fruition of Yoga*, i.e., knowledge, *what goal does he attain?*

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।

अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Does he not, O mighty-armed one, fallen from both and without any support perish like a detached cloud, being deluded in the path of Brahman?

The import of the question is being elucidated: *Does he not* etc. In the first place having offered all work to the Lord, and not having performed any (with the desire for heaven etc.), he does not attain heaven etc., resulting from it, and, secondly,

not having attained success in Yoga, he does not attain Liberation either. Thus *fallen from both*, he is *without any support*, resort, and therefore *deluded in the path* which leads to the realization of *Brahman*, does he not *perish* or does he escape death?—this is the idea. An example about destruction is given: Just as a *detached cloud*, being disconnected with a previous mass and not attaining any other, is dissolved in the interval, even so (does he not perish)?

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य च्छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

39. This doubt of mine, O Krishna, You should dispel in its entirety, for there is none else but You who can remove this doubt.

By You alone, the omniscient One, should this doubt of mine be cleared. There is no one besides You who can solve it. This is being stated: *This doubt* etc. One *who can remove*, dispel. *This*—the neuter form stands for the masculine. The rest is clear.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छन्ति ॥ ४० ॥



The Blessed Lord said:

40. Verily neither here nor hereafter, O Pārtha, is there destruction for him; for the doer of good, my child, never comes by evil.

The answer to the above question is given in four and a half verses beginning with: *The Blessed Lord said: Verily* etc. *Destruction* in this world is the loss of status arising from this fall from both (the goals, viz., heaven and Liberation); *destruction hereafter*, in the world after death, is the attainment of hell; neither of these ever befalls such a person. *For verily* the virtuous, *the doer of good, never comes by evil*, and this one is a doer of good, inasmuch as he has taken to Yoga with faith. He addresses endearingly by the term 'my child' according to popular usage.

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Having attained the worlds of the righteous and lived there for many, many years, one who has fallen from Yoga is born again in the house of the pure and prosperous.

In that case what goal does he attain? This is being stated: *Having etc. Having attained the worlds of the righteous, worlds attained by the performers of Ashwamedha and other sacrifices, and lived there, i.e., having experienced the pleasure of living there, for eternal or many, many years, one who has fallen from Yoga is born again, attains a birth, in the house of the pure, virtuous, and prosperous, wealthy.*

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Or he is reborn even in the family of Yogis who are wise; such a birth is rare indeed in this world.

The goal attained by a Yogi who has fallen after practising Yoga for a short time has been stated. An alternative, however, is being stated in the case of one who falls from Yoga after long practice; *Or he etc. He is reborn even in the family of those devoted to Yoga who are wise, i.e., possess spiritual knowledge, and not in the family of those mentioned above, who have not attained to Yoga. Such a birth is being praised: Such a birth is rare indeed in this world, as it leads to Liberation.*

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ ४३ ॥

43. There he comes in contact with knowledge acquired in the previous birth, and strives harder than before for perfection, O descendant of Kuru (Arjuna).

What (happens) then? It is being stated in a verse and a half beginning with: *There* etc. *There*, in both these kinds of birth, *he comes in contact with knowledge about Brahman acquired in the previous birth, and strives harder than before for perfection, Liberation.*

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हरियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४ ॥

44. By that very previous practice he is irresistibly carried away. Even a mere inquirer after Yoga transcends the Vedas.

The reason (for the statement made) is given: *By that* etc. *By that very practice* of his *previous body he is irresistibly carried away*; that is, even though he be unwilling through some obstacle, he is forced to devote himself to Brahman, being turned away from sense-objects. Thus struggling under the momentum of his former practice, he gradually attains Liberation.—This meaning is made explicit *fortiori* in the latter half of this verse and the next one: *Even a mere* etc. *Even a mere inquirer* into the

nature of *Yoga*, not one who has attained it—even such a novice in *Yoga*, though fallen from it owing to sin, *transcends the Vedas*, the results of ritualistic work prescribed by the *Vedas*, that is to say, attains greater results than those and is liberated.

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५ ॥

45. Verily, a *Yogi* who practises assiduously, being purified of all sins, is perfected through many births, (and) then attains the supreme Goal.

If a *Yogi* of even such lukewarm practice attains Liberation, then it goes without saying that a *Yogi who practises assiduously*, is devoted more and more to *Yoga*, being purified of, freed from, all sins, through *Yoga* itself, attains perfection, is perfected, thoroughly illumined, through the accumulated *Yoga* of many births, (and) then attains the supreme Goal.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ४६ ॥

46. The *Yogi* is regarded as greater than ascetics, greater than even men of knowledge and greater also than those

devoted to work; therefore be a Yogi, O Arjuna.

Since the result of Yoga, is as stated above, therefore, *The Yogi*, etc. *The Yogi is regarded as greater than ascetics*, devoted to penances like the Krichchra and Chāndrāyana, *greater than even men of knowledge*. knowers of the Scriptures<sup>1</sup> and *greater also than those devoted to work*, who perform rites like Ishta and Pūrta.<sup>2</sup> *Therefore be a Yogi.*

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्ग्रतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Of all Yogis even, he who, possessed of faith, worships Me with his mind absorbed in Me, is in My opinion the greatest.

Even among Yogis who are devoted to Yama, Niyama, etc. (i.e., self-control and other steps to Yoga). My devotee is superior. This is being stated: *Of all Yogis*, etc. *He who, possessed of*

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<sup>1</sup> Possessing mere scriptural knowledge and not realization.

<sup>2</sup> Ishta means sacrificial rites and Pūrta includes acts of charity like building rest-houses, digging wells, tanks, etc., for public use, installing temples and giving food in charity.

*faith worships Me, the supreme Lord, Vāsudeva, with his inner self or mind absorbed in Me, is in My opinion, the greatest of those devoted to Yoga. Therefore be My devotee—is the purport.*

He who taught the Yoga of the Self to the greatest of the devotees (Arjuna), I worship that Mādhava, the embodiment of supreme Bliss—the treasures of the devotees.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE AND REALIZATION

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Listen how, with the mind intent on Me, taking refuge in Me, and practising Yoga, O Pārtha (Arjuna), you will know Me in full, free from doubt.

The true nature of the Self that is to be known has been declared together with Yoga. Now is being described the Divine Form that is to be worshipped.

At the end of the last chapter it was said, "Of all yogis even, he who, possessed of faith, worships Me with his mind absorbed in Me, is in My opinion the greatest." Now, of what nature are You to whom worship is to be made? To answer this possible question *the Blessed Lord* with a view to describing His own nature, said: *Listen how* etc. He whose *mind is intent*, engrossed, *on Me*, the Lord; *taking refuge in Me*, to whom I am the sole refuge,



*and practising Yoga, listen how, listen to the knowledge—to be presently described—by which, you will know Me in full, i.e., with all My manifestations, might, Lord-ship, etc., free from doubt, so as to leave no room for doubt.*

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

2. I shall tell you without reserve about this knowledge (Jñāna) together with realization (Vijnāna), knowing which there remains nothing further to be known here.

He praises the knowledge that is going to be taught: *I shall, etc. I shall tell (you) without reserve, thoroughly, about this Jñāna, knowledge about Myself derivable from the Scriptures, together with Vijnāna, realization, knowing which there remains nothing further to be known here, to be known by one who is treading the path of well-being. That is to say, he becomes blessed by that alone.*

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Among thousands of men one perchance struggles for perfection; even

amongst those that struggle (one perchance becomes perfect), and even amongst those that are perfect, one perchance knows Me in reality.

But without devotion to Me, knowledge about Me is impossible. This is being stated: *Among*, etc. Amongst the innumerable creatures, excepting men, the rest have no inclination at all for the final Beatitude. But *among thousands of men only one perchance* owing to great merit *struggles for perfection*, for the attainment of Self-Knowledge. *Even amongst thousands that struggle, only one perchance* through great merit (acquired in a previous life) knows the Self. *And even amongst thousands of those that are perfect* through the knowledge of the Self, *only one perchance* through My grace *knows Me*, the supreme Self, *in reality*.<sup>1</sup> Thus, though this knowledge about Myself is so very rare, yet I shall tell it to you. This is the idea.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ ४ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> By the yoga delineated in Ch. VI one gets knowledge of the 'thou' only, of the Vedic dictum, 'Thou art That', and not of the 'That'. This knowledge is, therefore, rather partial. But when one gets full knowledge of the supreme Lord, the Ishwara, the 'That' of the Vedic dictum, then one's knowledge is perfect, and such a person is the most esteemed of Yogis.

4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism—thus is My Prakriti (Nature) divided into eight categories.

Having thus roused the listener's interest, next, in order to define the nature of Ishwara—the subject, introduced—as the author of creation, etc., through His Prakriti, the twofold Prakriti (Nature), differentiated as lower and higher, is being delineated in the two verses beginning with: *Earth*, etc. By *earth*, etc., the five elementary essences—smell, etc.—are meant. By the word *mind* its cause, the Ego, is meant, by *intellect* its cause, the cosmic intelligence (Mahat), and by *egoism* its cause, ignorance (Avidyā). Thus is My Prakriti (Nature) divided into eight categories. Or the verse may mean: By the term *earth*, etc., the five gross elements together with the (five) subtle ones are meant. By the term *egoism* is meant egoism together with its products, the senses. By *intellect* is meant the cosmic intelligence (Mahat). By the word *mind* is meant the Unmanifest (Pradhāna), whose form is not manifested and which can be inferred only by the mind. Thus, in this manner, is My Prakriti, My power known as Māyā, divided into eight categories, has got eight divisions. Though Prakriti is usually divided into twenty-four categories, yet, inasmuch as the other sixteen are included in these eight, it is said to be divided into eight categories. So, in the chapter on Kshetra (the body) to be dealt with later on, this

very Prakriti will be delineated as consisting of twenty-four categories: "The five gross elements, egoism, intellect, the Unmanifest, the ten sense-organs and the one mind and the five objects of the senses" etc. (XIII. 5).

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. This is My lower Prakriti; different from this, O mighty-armed one, know that higher Prakriti of Mine in the form of the individual soul (Jiva) by which this world is sustained.

While concluding the topic of this lower Prakriti, the higher Prakriti is being described: *This is, etc. This Prakriti* that has been taught as eight-fold, *is lower*, or inferior, since it is inert and meant for (the enjoyment of) another. *Higher*, superior than this *know that other Prakriti of Mine in the form of the individual soul (Jiva)*. The reason for its being higher is given. *By which* sentient principle the Kshetrajna (the embodied soul), *this world is sustained* through its own work.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६ ॥

6. Know that all beings have these two for their origin; I am the origin of the entire universe as also its destroyer.

By describing the casual nature of these two (lower and higher Prakritis), His being the cause of the creation, etc., through these Prakritis is being stated: *Know that*, etc. *Know all beings*, moving as well as stationary, to be such as *have these two Prakritis*, viz., Kshetra and Kshetrajna, *for their origin*, cause. Of these, the inert Prakriti evolves as the body. But the sentient Prakriti, which is a part of Me, enters into all bodies as the experiencer, and sustains them through its works. These two Prakritis of Mine are born of Me. Therefore *I am the origin*—lit., that from which a thing effectively comes into existence—the ultimate cause, *of the entire universe together with primal matter (Prakriti)*, as also I myself am that by which it is made to dissolve, that is, *its destroyer* as well.

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किंचिदस्ति धनंजय ।

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

7. Higher than Myself there is nothing else, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna). In Me all this is strung like gems in a string.

As it is so, therefore, *Higher than*, etc. *Higher than Myself there is nothing else*, no independent

cause whatsoever of the origin and destruction of the universe. I am also the cause of its sustenance. This is being stated: *In Me*, etc. *In Me all this universe is strung*, i.e., rests. The example is clear enough.

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभाऽस्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८ ॥

8. I am, O son of Kunti, sapidity in water, lustre in the moon and the sun, the syllable Om in all the Vedas, sound in ether and enterprise in man.

How He is the cause of the sustenance of the universe is being described in the five verses beginning with: *I am*, etc. *I am sapidity in water*, i.e., I exist in water as its substratum through My manifestation as the essence of sapidity. Likewise, I am *lustre in the moon and the sun*, i.e., through My manifestation as lustre, I exist in the moon and the sun as their substratum. The other cases that follow are also to be explained in a similar way. "In all the Vedas representing articulate sound, I am their root, the syllable Om. I am the essence of sound in ether. In man I am manliness, i.e., enterprise. Verily men exist through enterprise.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसो ।  
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

9. I am pure odour in earth, brightness in fire, life in all beings and austerity in the ascetics.

Further: *I am*, etc. *I am pure*, unadulterated, odour, the essence of smell, which exists as the substratum of earth. Or it may mean: Since the manifestation of the Lord as the substratum in everything is being inculcated in these texts, and as sweet odour alone through its excellence can be His manifestation, sweet odour is mentioned here. So also I am *brightness*, the natural glow, *in fire*. I am *life*, i.e., the vitality, that which sustains life, *in all beings*. I am *austerity*, the capacity to withstand pairs of opposites (like heat and cold) *in the ascetics*, the hermits and others.<sup>1</sup>

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।  
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १० ॥

10. Know me, O Pārtha, to be the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intelli-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Others' refers to monks, representing the last of the four stages of life. The hermits come third.



gence of the intelligent and the prowess of the powerful.

Further: *Know me*, etc. *The eternal seed*, the capacity of all beings, moving and stationary, to produce effects of the same species, which continues uninterruptedly in all the successive products—*know* that seed to be My manifestation, and not one that is destroyed with each individual. So also *I am the intelligence*, wisdom, of the intelligent. *I am the prowess of the powerful*, the might of the valorous.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ ११ ॥

11. I am the strength of the strong, free from passion and attachment, and, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), I am that passion in people which is unopposed to one's duty (Dharma).

Further: *I am*, etc. *Passion* is an active (Rājasika) desire for things not attained. *Attachment*, on the other hand, is a passive (Tāmasika) colouring of the mind which is synonymous with thirst for more of a desired object even when it has been attained. *I am the strength of the strong* bereft of these two (viz., passion and attachment), i.e., I am that serene (Sāttvika) strength which

enables one to perform one's duty. *I am that passion which is unopposed to one's duty*, which is helpful in merely having a son by one's wife.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ १२ ॥

12. All those Sāttvika (serene), Rājasika (active), and Tāmasika (passive) states that are there—know them to be born of Me alone; but I am not in them, (though) they abide in Me.

Further: *All those*, etc. Even *all* other Sāttvika states like control of the mind and the body, Rājasika states like pleasure and pride, and Tāmasika states like anguish and delusion, which result from the actions of beings, *know all of them to be born of Me alone*, since they are products of the Gunas of My Prakriti. Yet *I am not in them*, I am not subject to them like individual souls. But *they*, being under my control, *abide in Me*.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. All this world, deluded by these three states composed of the Gunas, does

not know Me, who am beyond these and immutable.

Why don't these people know You, the supreme Lord. whose nature is like this? That is being stated: *All this world*, etc. *All this world* is deluded by these above-mentioned three kinds of states or dispositions, like passion and avarice, which are composed of the Gunas, which are products of the Gunas. Therefore it (the world) *does not know Me*—of what nature?—*who am beyond*, unaffected by, these states, being their ruler, and therefore *immutable*, i.e., changeless.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४ ॥

14. This divine illusion of Mine, constituted of the Gunas, is indeed hard to surmount; those who take refuge in Me alone, get over this illusion.

Then who know You? To answer this the text says: *This divine*, etc., *This divine* supernatural, i.e., extremely wonderful *illusion of Mine*, power of the supreme Lord, *constituted of the Gunas*, consisting of the products of the three Gunas, Sattva, etc., is *hard to surmount indeed*, i.e., this is a well-known fact. Yet *those who take refuge in*, worship, *Me*

alone, through unwavering devotion—this is suggested by the word 'alone'—*get over this illusion*, although unsurmountable, and then know Me. This is the idea.

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।

माययाऽपहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Wretches among men, the wicked and the ignorant do not take refuge in Me, being deprived of discrimination by *Māyā*, and betaking themselves to demoniac attitude.

Why then don't all worship You alone? This is being answered: *Wretches*, etc. *Wretches among men*, those who are the worst, *do not take refuge in Me*, worship Me. The cause of their wretchedness: They are *ignorant*, bereft of discrimination. Why are they so? Because they are *wicked* or sinful; therefore who are *deprived* of their discrimination, though arising from the teaching of the Scripture and the Guru, *by Māyā*; consequently, *betaking themselves to demoniac attitude*, which will be described as, "Ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, rudeness", etc. (XVI. 4), they do not worship Me.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६ ॥

16. Four kinds of people who have done virtuous deeds worship Me, O Arjuna—the distressed person, the aspirant after knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of knowledge, O best of Bharatas.

The virtuous, however, worship Me. They are of four kinds according to differences in their virtue. That is being stated: *Four kinds*, etc. Those *who have done virtuous deeds* in their previous lives worship Me, and they are of *four kinds*. *The distressed person*, one who is overcome by disease etc. If he has done good deeds in the past (lives), then he worships Me; otherwise he worships minor deities and undergoes transmigration. This should be understood as applying to the other cases also. *The aspirant after knowledge*, one who is desirous of Self-realization: *The seeker of wealth*, one who wants to have wealth as a means to enjoyment either here or hereafter. *The man of knowledge*, one who has realized the Self.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Of these, the man of knowledge who is constantly in communion and single-minded in devotion excels. To the man of

knowledge I am very dear indeed, and he is dear to Me.

Amongst them the man of knowledge is the best. That is being stated: *Of these, etc. Of these, the man of knowledge excels.* The reasons being, he is constantly in communion, devoted to Me; single-minded in devotion, whose devotion is given exclusively to Me. Only to the man of knowledge and to none else is it possible to be constantly in communion and one-pointed in devotion, for he has no mental disturbance, being free from identification with the body, etc. For this very reason *I am very dear* to him, *and he is dear to Me.* Hence, on account of these four reasons, viz., constant communion, etc., he is the best. This is the idea.

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।

आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. All of these are indeed noble, but the man of realization I regard as My very Self; for with his mind fixed (on Me), he has taken refuge in Me alone as the highest goal.

Then do the other three types of Your devotees undergo transmigration? No, never. That is being stated: *All of these are indeed*

*noble, high-souled, and obtain Liberation; but the man of realization is My very Self—this is My definite opinion. For he, the man of realization, having his mind fixed on Me alone, has taken refuge in Me as a goal higher than which there is none other, that is, as the highest goal. That is to say, he does not care for any other result than Me.*

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९ ॥

19. At the end of innumerable births, the man of realization takes refuge in Me, knowing that all this is Vāsudeva. Such a saint is exceedingly rare.

Such a devotee of Mine is exceedingly rare. This is being stated: *At the end* etc. With the accumulation of virtue bit by bit through innumerable births, at the end, in the last or final birth, the man of realization, knowing that all this moveable and immoveable world is Vāsudeva takes refuge in Me, worships Me, as the universal Self. Therefore such a saint of unlimited vision is exceedingly rare.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥



20. Deprived of discrimination by particular desires, they worship other deities observing particular rites, being swayed by their own nature.

Thus it has been stated that even those possessed of desires who worship the Lord for their fulfilment, attain these desires and thereafter gradually attain Liberation. But those who are extremely active (Rājasika) and inert (Tāmasika), and who, being thus overpowered by desires, worship minor deities, go from birth to birth. That is being stated in the four verses beginning with: *Deprived* etc. *Deprived of discrimination by particular desires* concerning sons, fame, victory over enemies, etc., *they worship other minor deities* like ghosts, spirits and demigods. *Doing what? Observing particular rites* like fasting connected with the worship of particular deities, and *being swayed*, controlled, at that *by their own nature*, inclination resulting from past habit.

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Whatever form a particular devotee wishes to worship with faith—concerning that alone I make his faith unflinching.

Amongst those who worship particular deities *whatever form* etc. *Whatever form*, deity, who is but an image of Myself, *a particular devotee wishes*, proceeds, *to worship with faith*, concerning that very form *I*, the Inner Ruler, *make his*, that devotee's, *faith unflinching*, firm.

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

22. Endowed with that faith, he worships that deity, and from him gets his desires, which are indeed granted by Me alone.

*Endowed* etc. Then *he*, that devotee, *endowed with that unflinching faith*, worships that particular deity and from him, from that particular deity, gets his, particular desires, objects coveted by himself, which, however, are obviously granted, bestowed, by Me alone as the Inner Ruler of that deity, inasmuch as those deities are also under My control and are but forms of Mine. This is the idea.

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।

देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

23. But that fruit of these men of little understanding has an end; the

worshippers of gods go to the gods, (but) My devotees come to Me.

Thus, though all the gods are but manifestations of Myself, and hence worshipping them is in reality worshipping Me alone, and though it is I who am the bestower of the fruit of that as well, yet there is a difference between them (devotees of other deities) and My direct devotees as regards the fruit attained. This is being stated: *But that* etc., *But that fruit of these men of little understanding*, of limited vision, although granted by Me, *has an end*, is perishable. This is what is being stated: *The worshippers of gods go to the gods*, who are perishable. *But My devotees attain Me*, who am supreme Bliss with no beginning or end.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. Not knowing My immutable, unsurpassed supreme nature, the ignorant regard Me, the unmanifest, as coming into being.

But then, if the labour is the same in both (kinds of worship) and yet there is such a vast difference in the result, why don't all worship You alone, giving up other gods? That is being

answered: *Not knowing* etc. *The ignorant regard Me, the unmanifest, who am beyond this phenomenal universe, as coming into being, as becoming man, fish, tortoise, etc.*<sup>1</sup>; the reason being, they do not know *My supreme nature* or reality. Of what kind is it? It is *immutable*, eternal, and to which nothing is superior, i.e., *unsurpassed*. Therefore viewing Me, the supreme Lord, who at will assume diverse bodies made of pure and excellent Sattva particles for the protection of the world, as equal to the other gods with material bodies fashioned by their past actions—the dull-witted do not revere Me; rather they worship other gods bestowing quick results and (thereby), obtain perishable results in the manner stated above.

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।

मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. I am not manifest to all, being veiled by My mysterious power (Yoga-māyā). This ignorant world does not know Me, the unborn and immutable.

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the ten Incarnations of the Lord at different times in different forms, viz., fish, tortoise, boar, half-lion halfman, the dwarf, Parashurāma, Rāma, Krishna, Buddha—and Kalki, who is yet to come. The last six are in human form.

The cause of their ignorance about Himself is being stated (by the Lord): *I am* etc., *I am not manifest*, visible, to all people, but only to My devotees, for I am veiled by My mysterious power (*Yogamāyā*). 'Yoga' means bringing about, i.e., some mysterious play of My intelligence; that itself is *Māyā* (illusion)—the dexterity to make impossible things possible. The ignorant are veiled by that *Māyā*. Therefore being ignorant about My nature, *this world does not know Me, the unborn and immutable.*

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २६ ॥

26. I know, O Arjuna, all beings past, present and future, but nobody knows Me.

It has been said (by the Lord), "Not knowing My supreme nature, the ignorant" etc. (VII. 24). By showing that very supreme nature of His as consisting in His omniscience, just the ignorance of others is being stated (by the Lord): *I know*, etc. *I know all beings* immovable and movable of all times—*past*, those that have perished, *present and future*, that are yet to come into existence; for as is well known, *Māyā* rests on Me, and it cannot delude the person on whom it rests. *But nobody knows Me*, being deluded by My *Māyā*.

It is indeed well known in this world that Māyā is subservient to the person on whom it rests, while it deludes others.

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥ २७ ॥

27. All beings, O scorcher of foes, are deluded at birth by that deception due to the pairs of opposites which arises out of desire and aversion, O descendant of Bharata.

Thus the ignorance of individual souls with respect to the Lord on account of their being subject to Māyā has been stated. The reason for the toughness of that very ignorance is being stated: *All beings*, etc. That which is created is creation (viz., the gross body). *At birth*, when the gross body comes into existence, *by that deception*, loss of discrimination, *due to the pairs of opposites* like heat and cold, happiness and misery, *which arises out of desire* for what is pleasing to it *and aversion* for that which is disagreeable, *all beings are deluded*, i.e., are deeply identified (with the body) feeling, 'I am happy', 'I am miserable'. Therefore, having no knowledge of Me, they do not worship Me. This is the idea.

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

28. But those of virtuous actions whose sins have been at an end, are freed from the delusion of the dualities and worship Me with firmness of vow.

But then, how is it that some people are seen to worship You? That is being answered: *But those etc. But those* habituated to *virtuous actions whose sins*, which are obstructions in the way of (realization), *have been at an end*, destroyed, *are freed from the delusion* arising out of the dualities, and *worship Me with firmness of vow*, i.e., being devoted to Me alone.

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. Those who strive for freedom from decay and death, taking refuge in Me, know that Brahman, all about the embodied self and action in its entirety.

Thus worshipping Me, they come to know all that is to be known and are satisfied. That is being stated: *Those who etc. Those who strive for freedom from*, strive to avoid, *decay and death, taking refuge in Me*, know that supreme Brahman and know all about the embodied self, that pure



Self distinct from the body etc., by which that goal (Brahman) is to be attained, *and action in its entirety*, i.e., together with the esoteric teaching, which is the means to this (realization).

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।

प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ ३० ॥

30. Those who know Me together with what concerns beings, the gods and sacrifices—fix their mind (on Me) and know Me even at the time of death.

For such people there is no fear of lapse from Yoga also. This is being stated: *Those who* etc. The meaning of the terms 'what concerns beings (Adhibhuta) etc.' the Lord Himself will explain in the next chapter. *Those who know Me together with what concerns beings*, what concerns *the gods* (Adhidaiva) and what concerns *sacrifices* (Adhiyajna), *fix their mind on (Me)*, have their minds intent on Me, *and know Me even at the time of passing away*, i.e., *death*. Even at that moment they do not get perplexed and forget Me. Therefore there is no fear of a lapse from Yoga for My devotees. This is the idea.

That the knowledge of Brahman is attained without effort by the devotees of Kṛishna, is clearly stated in the seventh (chapter) entitled 'The Yoga of Realization.'

**CHAPTER VIII**  
**THE WAY TO THE SUPREME SPIRIT**

अर्जुन उवाच ।

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।  
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna Said:

1. What is that Brahman, what is Adhyātma, and what is action, O best of men? What is called the Adhibhuta and what is said to be the Adhidaiva?

Those whose mind is fixed on Sri Krishna alone know the Brahman, action, Adhibhuta, etc.—the Brahman, action, etc., mentioned thus (in the last chapter) are clearly explained in the eighth (chapter).

*Arjuna*, who desired to know the real nature of the seven categories, viz., Brahman, Adhyātma, etc., which were mentioned by the Lord at the end of the last chapter *said* in two verses beginning with: *What is* etc. The meaning (of this verse) is quite clear.

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

2. Who and how is the Adhiyajna in this body, O slayer of Madhu (Sri Krishna)? And how are You known at the time of death by the self restrained?

Further: *Who and how* etc. *Who is the Adhiyajna* the presiding deity—the director of action and bestower of its fruit—in the sacrifice that is going on *in this body*? Having asked separately about the nature (of the Adhiyajna), he now questions about the manner of his dwelling (in this body). *How*, residing in what manner, in this body does he preside over the sacrifice? The word ‘sacrifice’ implies all ritualistic actions. *And at the time of death how*, by what means, *are You known* by persons who have restrained their minds.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

3. The highest imperishable principle is Brahman. Its existence as the embodied soul is called Adhyātma, and the offering (into the sacrificial fire) which causes the origin and development of beings is called action.

In answer to the questions, according to their order, *the Blessed Lord said* in the three verses beginning with: *The highest* etc. That which does not decay, which is constant, is *the imperishable*. *The imperishable principle* that is the *highest*, the primal cause of the universe, is *Brahman*. For the Scripture says: "O Gārgi, the knowers of Brahman say, this immutable Brahman is that" (Brih. 3. 8. 8.). *Its*, Brahman's own coming into being in part as the individual soul, is called *Swabhāva*. The same principle existing as the experiencer presiding over the body, is called, i.e., designated by the word, *Adhyātma*, *Origin*, birth, of viviparous and other beings, and their *development*, evolution in a higher form, in the order stated in the text: "The oblations offered in the fire reaches the sun in full, from the sun results rain, from rain (results) food and from it beings" (Manu 3. 76). That *offering*, or sacrifice consisting in the putting of things into the fire for some deity, *which causes the above origin and development (of beings)* is called *action*. This offering includes by implication all (ritualistic) action.

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

4. Perishable entities are called Adhi-bhuta, the cosmic Being is called Adhidaiva,

and I Myself am called the Adhiyajna in this body, O best of embodied beings.

Further: *Perishable* etc. *Perishable* or destructible. *entities*, objects like the body, characterise all beings and are therefore called *Adhibhuta*. The cosmic Being the Viraj, who resides in the centre of the solar orb, the Lord of all deities who are but parts of Him, is called the *Adhidaiva*. The Scripture says: "He indeed is the first embodied being and is known as the Purusha; He is the First Cause of all beings and existed even before Brahmā." In this body, I Myself, who abide as the Inner Controller, am the *Adhiyajna*, the presiding deity of sacrifices etc. and the bestower of their fruit. We should understand that the answer to the question, 'How?' (vide verse 2), is given by this very statement. It is well known that the Inner Controller owing to qualities like non-attachment, is different from the individual soul and resides in the body. As the Scripture says: "Two birds of beautiful plumage, closely united in friendship, reside on the self-same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit thereof, the other witnesses without eating" (Mu. 3.1.1.). By addressing Arjuna as the best of embodied beings, the Lord hints: "You too can understand such an Inner Controller by the method of agreement and difference, from your actions

and inhibitions<sup>1</sup> that are under the control of another.”

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

5. He who at the time of death remembers Me alone and passes out, leaving the body, attains My being—there is no doubt about this.

The means to knowledge at the time of death and its result, which were asked in the question, “And how are You known at the time of death?” are being stated: *He who* etc. *He who remembers Me alone*, the supreme Lord, who am the Inner Controller as described above, *and passes out* pre-eminently by the path of light<sup>2</sup> etc. *leaving the body attains My being*,

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<sup>1</sup> A free agent is successful in all actions undertaken by him and is able to abstain from all actions he wants to avoid. But no individual soul is free agent. The Lord says that Arjuna can find this out from his own experience. On reflection he will understand that only when the Lord helps him, he can do something or refrain from doing something and in the absence of that help he is powerless. In this way he will understand his subservience to the Inner Controller.

<sup>2</sup> The Scriptures say that the departed soul of the knower of the conditioned Brahman goes to the sphere of Brahman by

identification with Me—*there is no doubt about this*. Remembrance is the means to knowledge, and the attainment of My being is the result. This is the idea.

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Thinking of whatever object at the time of death a person leaves the body, he attains, O son of Kunti, that very object, being constantly absorbed in its thought.

It is not the rule that remembering Me alone people attain My being. What then is it? *Thinking* etc. *Thinking of whatever object*, any particular deity or other being, *at the time of death a person leaves the body*, he attains that very object remembered. The cause of remembering a particular object at the time of death is: *Constantly thinking or meditating upon it, with his mind absorbed, steeped, in that.*

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिमिवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥ ७ ॥

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the path of the gods, where it is conducted by several deities beginning with the deity identified with light. Vide chapter 8.23-26 and also B.S. 4.3. 1-4; Chh. 5.10.1, Brih. 6.2.15, Kau. 1.3 and Mu. 1.2.11.



7. Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight; with your mind and intellect devoted to Me, shall attain Me alone—there is no doubt about this.

As it is previous impressions that lead to remembrance at the time of death, and as it is not at all possible for a moribund person to make an effort at remembrance at that time, *therefore*, etc. *Therefore*, always remember, meditate on, Me. And constant remembrance is not possible without purity of mind. Therefore *fight*, perform your duty like fighting etc. for attaining purity of mind. *You* who have thus devoted to Me your mind, which is reflective, and intellect, which is determinative, shall attain Me alone—there is no doubt about this.

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

8. With a mind that has taken to the way of constant practice and does not stray to anything else, one who thinks of the supreme divine Being, attains Him, O Pārtha.

That practice is the direct means to constant remembrance is being shown by saying, *With a mind* etc. *Practice* means a stream of homo-

geneous thoughts; that itself is the Yoga or *way*. With a mind that has taken to that, i.e., is concentrated, and is consequently accustomed not to stray to anything else, one who thinks of the divine, resplendent, supreme Being, the supreme Lord, O Pārtha, attains Him alone.

कवि पुराणमनुशासितार-

मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-

मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन

भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्

स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

9-10. He who, endowed with devotion, meditates at the time of death with a steady mind, having by the power of Yoga properly fixed the life-breath in between the eyebrows, on the Being who is wise, ancient, the ruler, smaller than the smallest, the sustainer of all, of inconceivable form, resplendent like the sun and beyond ignorance—he attains the shining supreme Being.

Again the Being to be meditated upon is being specified: *He who*, etc. *Wise*, omniscient; *ancient*, existing from eternity; *the ruler*, the regulator (of the universe); *smaller than the smallest*, subtler than the subtlest; *the sustainer* or nourisher of all, being of infinite glory; *of inconceivable form*, not comprehended by the mind and intellect of the impure; *resplendent like the sun*, whose nature like the sun, is self-luminous and manifests other things; *and who exists beyond ignorance*, Prakriti. For the Sruti says: "I have known that supreme Being, resplendent like the sun, who exists beyond ignorance" (Svet. 3·8). *He who, endowed with devotion, meditates with a steady mind at the time of death on such a Being.* The reason for the steadiness of the mind is being stated: *Having by the power of Yoga (raised) the life-breath properly through the channel of the Sushumnā and fixed it in between the eyebrows, he attains that shining, resplendent, supreme Being.*

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति

विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति

तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

11. That imperishable Principle which the knowers of the Vedas describe, into which aspirants bereft of all desires enter,

desiring which one lives the abstinent life of a student—that goal I shall tell you in brief.

The Lord, with a view to instructing that practice based on the syllable 'Om', which is a more direct means than simple practice, proposes: *That etc. That imperishable Principle which adepts in Vedanta describe*; for the Scripture says: "Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable, O Gargi, the sun and the moon are held in their positions" (Brih. 3-8-9). *Into which aspirants*, those who are striving, *bereft of all desires*, from whom all desires have been eradicated, *enter*; and *desiring* to know *which one lives the abstinent life of a student with one's preceptor—that goal* (lit. that which is attained) *I shall tell you in brief*, in sum. That is to say, I shall tell you how to attain it.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूढन्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

12-13. Controlling all the inlets (organs), confining the mind to the heart, fixing the life-breath in the head, betaking himself to absorption in Yoga, repeating the monosyllable Om, which is Brahman,

and thinking of Me, he who departs leaving the body, attains the highest Goal.

The proposed means together with its accessories is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Controlling* etc. *Controlling* withdrawing, *all the inlets* of the organs, i.e., not cognizing external objects through the eyes, etc.; *confining the mind to the heart*, i.e., not remembering external objects; *fixing the life-breath in the head*, between the eyebrows, *betaking himself to absorption*, steadiness, in *Yoga*, *repeating the monosyllable Om*, which is *Brahman* Itself, since it expresses *Brahman*, or is a symbol of *Brahman* like images, etc., and *thinking of Me*, who am expressed by that (Om)—*he who departs* well by the path of light<sup>1</sup> etc., *leaving the body, attains the highest Goal*, i.e., *Myself*.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

14. To the ever-restrained Yogi who constantly remembers Me every day with his mind on nothing else, O Pārtha, I am easily accessible.

Attaining Me in this manner at the time of death through concentration is possible only if

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<sup>1</sup>Vide VIII. 25-26, VIII 5, foot-note 2.

there is daily practice, and for none else—this earlier statement itself is recalled: *To the ever-restrained etc. To the ever-restrained, self-collected, (Yogi), whose mind is on nothing else than Myself and who constantly, continuously, remembers Me every day, I am easily accessible and not to others.*

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नानुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The great-souled ones, having attained Me, have no more birth, which is the abode of misery and non-eternal, for they have attained the highest perfection.

Though You are so easy of attainment, what of that? This is being answered: *The great-souled ones, etc. The great-souled ones, described above. i.e., My devotees, having attained Me, have no more birth which is the abode of misery and non-eternal. For they have attained the highest perfection, viz., Liberation itself. Or it may mean: Having attained Me, they do not come to the abode or place of rebirth and misery.*

आब्रह्मभुवनालोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कोन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

16. All the worlds, O Arjuna, including the world of Brahmā are subject to

recurrence, but after attaining Me there is no rebirth, O son of Kunti.

This very fact (of non-return after attaining Me) is being confirmed by showing that there is recurrence in all the worlds: *All the worlds*, etc. The world or abode of Brahmā is the Brahmaloka; *all the worlds including the world of Brahmā are subject to recurrence*. As even the world of Brahmā is subject to destruction, rebirth is inevitable for those who have gone to that place but have not attained knowledge. Only those who have thus attained the world of Brahmā through meditations for which gradual emancipation is the result, and who have attained knowledge there, attain Liberation along with Brahmā (at the time of the final dissolution) and not others<sup>1</sup>. For those, however, who live *after attaining Me*, there is certainly *no rebirth*. This is the idea.

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who attain Brahmaloka through sacrifices like Ashwamedha have to return to this mundane world when that world of Brahmā is destroyed at the final dissolution. But those who have gone there as a result of meditation and worship of the conditioned Brahman, do not return. They attain Self-realization there and get merged in the supreme Brahman at the time of dissolution. This is known as gradual Liberation.



17. Those who know Brahmā's day that lasts for a thousand Yugas and his night that lasts for a thousand Yugas, are knowers of day and night.

But then, from Purāṇic statements like: "The contemplative, the charitable, the dispassionate and the hardy attain an abode higher than the three worlds (viz., earth, heaven and the nether region) that is free from afflictions," we understand that Maharloka, etc., are superior to the three worlds. But if destruction is the common lot of all the worlds, how can there be that distinction? Anticipating such a question, in order to convey that the difference lies in the fact that Maharloka, etc., last for a long time, while the other three last for a short time, by showing that on each day of Brahmā who lives a hundred years according to his own scale, the three worlds are created, and on each night of his they are dissolved, the Lord states the duration of Brahmā's day and night: *Those who etc. Those who through their Yoga power know Brahmā's day, that lasts for a thousand Yugas, and who know his night, that lasts for a thousand Yugas*—those all-knowing persons alone are knowers of day and night. But those whose knowledge comes only from the motion of the sun and the moon, are not such knowers of day and night, for their vision is limited. By 'Yuga' is here meant a quartet of Yugas. For

the Vishnu Purāna says: "Brahmā's day lasts a thousand quartets of Yugas." The word 'Brahmā' in the text includes the inhabitants of Maharloka, etc., by implication. Now that is the method of computing time: One year of men is equal to a day and night of the gods. Computing fortnights, months, etc., with such days and nights, one complete quartet of Yugas stands for twelve thousand (such) years. A thousand such Yugas is Brahmā's day, and (his) night also is of equal duration. Computing fortnights, months, etc., with such days and nights, Brahmā's lifetime lasts a hundred (such) years.

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

18. From the Unmanifest all manifested beings are born at the advent of (Brahmā's) day, and at the approach of (his) night they get merged in that very thing called the Unmanifest.

What follows from it? This is being answered: *From the* etc. The unmanifest form of the effect is the cause. Therefore *from the Unmanifest*, which is the cause, *the manifest beings*, the moving and stationary beings, come forth. When? *At the advent of day*, at the dawn of Brahmā's day.

Likewise, *at the approach of night in that very thing called the Unmanifest*, the causal substance, *they get merged*. Or the text of the previous verse does not predicate, "They are knowers of day and night", but that verse is to be construed with this one as follows: "That which the well-known knowers of day and night know as Brahma's day—at the approach of that day the manifest beings come forth from the Unmanifest. That which they know as the night—at the approach of that night they (these beings) get merged."

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

19. That very multitude of beings, being born again and again, is absorbed at the approach of night, O Pārtha, and at the approach of day is born again in spite of itself.

Refuting the possibility therein of the destruction of what is done and the enjoyment of the result of what is not done, an unbroken succession of creation and dissolution is being shown in order to infuse a spirit of dispassion: *That very* etc. *That very multitude* or *group of beings*, moving and stationary creatures, which existed before, and none other, *being born again and again* at the approach

of day, *is absorbed again and again at the approach of night, and is born again at the approach of day in spite of itself, being subject to its past actions (Karma), etc.*

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

20. Beyond this Unmanifest there is another unmanifest eternal Being that does not perish when all creatures perish.

After elucidating the impermanence of the worlds, the eternity of the Lord's nature is being elucidated in the two verses beginning with: *Beyond etc. Beyond this Unmanifest*, existing as the cause even of this Unmanifest (Prakriti) which is the cause of the moving and unmoving universe, *is another unmanifest eternal Being*, which is different from the said Unmanifest (Prakriti), and which is beyond the perception of the senses and beginningless, *that does not perish even when all creatures, which are but causes and effects, perish.*

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

21. That Unmanifest which is called the Imperishable is said to be the supreme

Goal, attaining which they return not; that is My supreme abode (state).

Giving evidence for its imperishability, the Lord says: *That Unmanifest* etc. That Being which is *unmanifest*, beyond sense-perception, and imperishable, i.e., which has neither birth nor destruction, and hence *which is called the Imperishable* in Sruti texts like, "Similarly from the Imperishable this world comes into being" (Mu. 1.1.7),—*that is said to be the supreme Goal*, the final aim of human life, by scriptural texts like, "There is nothing higher than the Purusha; He is the limit, He is the supreme Goal" (Kath. 3.11). Its being the supreme Goal is stated: *Attaining which they return not. That also is My abode, My natural state.* The sixth case-ending in 'My' is used in the sense of identity, as when we say 'Rāhu's head' (Rāhu being nothing but the head). Therefore I am Myself the supreme Goal—is the meaning.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. That supreme Being, O Pārtha, in whom are all beings and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable by one-pointed devotion.

It has already been declared that the direct means to attain Him is devotion. That very thing is reiterated: *That* etc. And I, *that supreme Being*, am attainable by one-pointed devotion, by devotion which knows no other refuge than Myself, and not by any other means. His supremeness is being stated: *In whom* as the cause are all beings, and by whom as the cause all this is pervaded or permeated.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

23. The time at which departing (from hence) the Yogis attain non-return or return—that time, O best of Bharatas, I shall tell you.

Thus it has been stated that the worshippers of the Lord, having attained Him, do not return, but others come and go. Now it may be asked, departing by which path do they not rotate and departing by which path do they rotate? This is being answered: *The time* etc. The construction of the verse is as follows: I shall tell you the time when departing the Yogis attain non-return, and the time when departing they return. Here death at special times like the six months of the northern course of the sun is not intended according to the

reasoning established in the Brahma Sūtras: “(The soul of a knower of the conditioned Brahman when he dies) follows the rays (of the sun)” (B.S. 4.2.18); “And for the same reason (the soul follows the rays) even during the sun’s southern course” (B.S. 4. 2. 20). Therefore, by ‘time’ is meant the path attained under guidance of deities identified with time (who conduct the soul)<sup>1</sup>. Hence the meaning is this: Departing by which path characterized by the presiding deities of *time the Yogis*, the worshippers of the Lord, and the performers of ritualistic work *attain non-return and*

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<sup>1</sup> According to these Sūtras the knower of Brahman goes to Brahmaloka at whatever time he may die, be it by day or by night, bright or dark half of the month, the northern or southern passage of the sun. So the reference to time in this verse is not to any particular auspicious time, but to the path of the gods and the path of the manes—or the bright and dark paths—as verse 26 states, along which the knower of the conditioned Brahman and the performer of sacrifices respectively are guided by deities identified with time, viz., the deity of the day, bright half of the month, etc., along the bright path of the gods, and the deity of smoke, of night, etc., along the dark path or the path of the manes. Those knowers of Brahman who go by the former path go to Brahmaloka and do not return to this world. They live in Brahmaloka till it is dissolved, when these souls along with Brahmā, the ruler of that world, merge in the supreme Brahman. This is what is known as gradual emancipation. But those who go by the other path go to heaven, and there enjoy the fruit of the good deeds, and when they are exhausted, they are reborn in this world, to work out their Karma.



*return* respectively, *that* path characterized by the presiding deities of *time* I shall tell you.

Though fire and flame (the first two stages in the path of non-return described in the next verse) have no identification with time, yet, as most of the things denoted by terms like 'day' are deities identified with time, and as these two are mentioned along with them, their inclusion in the path by the word 'time' is not inappropriate, even as we say 'a mango grove', though there may be a few other trees in it.

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

24. Fire, the flame, the day, the bright half of the month and the six months of the sun's northern course—departing by this path the knowers of Brahman attain Brahman.

The path of non-return is being stated: *Fire, the flame*, etc. By the words *fire* and *flame* is indicated the deity identified with flame mentioned in the Sruti text: "(Those who know this science of the five fires and those who in the forest meditate with faith and penance), reach the deity identified with the flame" (Chh. 5. 10. 1). *Day* refers to the deity identified with it; *the bright half of the month*

refers to the deity identified with it; *the six months of the sun's northern course* refers to the deity identified with them. These few include by implication other deities like the deities identified with the year, the world of the gods, etc., mentioned in the Scriptures. *Departing by this path* which is of such a nature, the worshippers of the Lord attain (the conditioned) *Brahman*, for they are *knowers of Brahman*. As the Scripture says: "They reach the deity identified with the flame, from him the deity of the day, from him the deity of the fortnight in which the moon waxes, from him the deities identified with the six months in which the sun travels northward, from them he reaches the deity identified with the world of the gods", etc. (Brih. 6. 2. 15).

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

25. Smoke, the night, the dark half of the month, and the six months of the sun's southern passage—departing by this path the Yogi attains the lunar sphere and returns (thence).

The path of return is being stated: *Smoke*, etc. By *smoke* is meant the deity identified with smoke. By *night*, etc., as before, the three deities

identified with the night, the dark half of the month and the six months of the sun's southern passage are meant. The path which is characterized by these deities—*departing by this path* the man of (ritualistic) action *attains the lunar sphere*, i.e., heaven indicated by this sphere, and there enjoying the result of his virtuous acts, *returns*. On this point also Sruti says: "They attain the deity identified with smoke", etc. (Brih. 6. 2. 16). Thus through meditation combined with selfless work one attains gradual Liberation, and through actions done with desire (like sacrifices etc.), one returns (to this world) after enjoyment in the heavens. Those, however, who do prohibited actions—they return here after undergoing suffering in hell. While creatures of trifling actions are born again and again here itself.

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।

एकया यात्यनावृत्तिं अन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

26. These two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal; by one, one returns not, and by the other, one returns.

(The topic of) the two paths mentioned is being concluded: *These two* etc. *The bright*, the path of the flame, etc., as it is characterized by

light. *The dark*, the path of the smoke etc., as it is characterized by darkness. *These two paths of the world* of men qualified for knowledge and action (respectively) *are considered to be eternal*, beginningless, as the world is beginningless. Of the two, *by the bright one*, one returns not, one attains cessation (of conditioned existence) or Liberation, *and by the other*, the dark one, one returns.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७ ॥

27. Knowing these paths, O Pārtha, no Yogi is deluded; therefore at all times, O Arjuna, be endowed with Yoga.

By showing the result of knowledge about the (two) paths, the Yoga of devotion is being concluded: *Knowing these* etc. *Knowing these paths*, O Pārtha, which lead to Liberation and rebirth (respectively) *no Yogi is deluded*, i.e., he does not desire results like heaven as something pleasurable, but is devoted to the Lord alone.

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव

दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।

अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा

योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ २८ ॥

28. Whatever good result is declared regarding the Vedas, sacrifices, asceticism and gifts—all that the Yogi who knows the above transcends and attains the primeval supreme Abode.

The subject matter of the chapter, viz., the ascertainment of the meaning of the eight questions (of Arjuna), is concluded with its fruit: *Whatever* etc. *Regarding the Vedas*, i.e., from their study, etc., regarding *sacrifices*, by their performance, etc., regarding *asceticism*, by emaciating the body, etc., and regarding *gifts*, by their being offered to worthy persons, etc.—*whatever good result is declared* by the Scriptures, *all that he transcends*, i.e., he attains that glory of Yoga which is even superior to it. Doing what (does he attain this)? By knowing the Truth which is expounded by way of answers to these eight questions, and thereby becoming a Yogi or man of knowledge, he *attains the supreme primeval Abode*, Abode that is the origin of the world, viz., the supreme abode of Vishnu.

In this eighth chapter is explicitly declared an easy attainment, by the eighth path, of the desired abode through the ascertainment of the meanings of eight specially desired questions.

**CHAPTER IX**  
**THE WAY OF ROYAL KNOWLEDGE**  
**AND ROYAL SECRET**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. To you who are not cavilling, I shall teach this most secret knowledge in particular, coupled with realization, knowing which you will be freed from evil.

In the eighth (chapter) it has been established that the Lord is attained by pure devotion. Now in the ninth His most wonderful glory is being delineated.

Having first taught in the seventh and eighth chapters that His own supreme divine Essence is easily attained through devotion alone and by no other means, now in order to expound His incomprehensible glory and the extraordinary power of devotion, *the Blessed Lord said: To you* etc. That by which (the Lord) is well comprehended is Vijnāna, i.e., meditation. *To you who are not cavilling*, that is,

who do not find fault with Me, the infinitely merciful one, thinking that I am repeatedly teaching My own greatness, verily *I shall teach this knowledge in particular* about the Lord, *coupled with realization*. The words, 'in particular', indicate speciality. This is being explained: *Most secret* etc. Knowledge about religion is a secret. A greater secret is knowledge about the (individual) self, which is different from the body, etc. Knowledge about the supreme Self, being a much greater mystery than even that, is the *most secret knowledge: knowing which* (knowledge) *you will be freed*, liberated this moment, *from evil*, from this mundane existence.

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

2. This is royal knowledge, the royal secret, supremely holy, directly experienced, righteous, easy to practise and imperishable.

Further: *This is* etc. *This knowledge is royal knowledge*, king of knowledges, and *the royal secret*, the king of secrets, i.e., amongst knowledges and secrets this is the best. The secondary words in these compounds are placed at the end, since they



belong to the group of words like 'Rājadanta<sup>1</sup>.' This (knowledge) is *supremely holy*, highly sanctifying; *directly experienced*, i.e., its result is patent; *righteous*, not deviating from duty, for it includes the fruit of all virtuous acts (prescribed by the Scriptures); *easy to practise*, possible to perform without effort; and *imperishable*, for its result is everlasting.

अश्रद्धाणाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।

अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ३ ॥

3. Persons wanting in faith in this teaching, O scorcher of foes, return to the path of this mortal world without attaining Me.

If this were so very easy to attain, who would be subject to transmigration? It is being answered: *Persons* etc. *Persons* who are *wanting in faith in this teaching*, who do not accept it with faith, though they may have tried to attain Me by other means—they *without attaining Me return to the path of this mortal world*, i.e., they go round

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<sup>1</sup> In 'Rājavidyā' and 'Rājaguhyam', as the words Vidyā and Guhyam are secondary in import they ought to come first in the compound; yet they are put last as in the word 'Rājadanta' ('the king of the teeth'), which normally would be 'Dantarāja'.

and round in this world where death stalks freely.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४ ॥

4. All this is pervaded by Me of unmanifest form; all beings are in me, but I am not in them.

Thus having made the hearer inquisitive by praising the knowledge that has been introduced as the topic, that very knowledge is being expounded in the two verses beginning with: *All this* etc. *All this is pervaded*, permeated, *by Me*, the cause, *of unmanifest form*, whose nature is beyond sense perception. Witness the Sruti: "Having projected it, It entered into it" (Taitt. 2.6). Therefore *all beings are in Me*, all beings moving and stationary dwell in Me who am their cause. Though it is so, yet *I am not in them* as clay is in its effects, the pots, etc.—being unattached like space.<sup>1</sup>

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ५ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> Though all objects are in space, space is not in any object, being non-attached.

5. Nor are the beings in Me, behold My divine mystery; (though) the sustainer and the protector of beings, yet, My Self is not in these beings.

Further: *Nor are* etc. *Nor are the beings in Me*<sup>1</sup> just because of My non-contact. But in that case would not Your pervading all beings and being their support, which have been stated in the previous verse, be contradicted? Anticipating such a doubt, the Lord says: *Behold*, etc. *Behold My divine mystery*, supernatural (power of) arrangement, the skill to make impossible things possible. That is to say, as the grandeur of My mysterious power is beyond all reasoning, there is no contradiction whatsoever. Behold yet other wonders, He says: (*Though*) *the sustainer* etc. *Sustainer* of beings, one who nourishes or maintains beings. *The protector of beings*, one who maintains or protects beings. Though *My Self*, My supreme reality, is such, *yet it is not in these beings*. This is the idea: Though I am the sustainer and protector of these beings, yet, being free from ego-consciousness I am not in them, unlike the embodied soul, which, as it sustains and protects the body, gets attached to it by reason of its ego-consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> The statement made in the previous verse is contradicted here, and explanation is also given as to how these two contradictory statements are feasible.

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ६ ॥

6. As the vast wind blowing everywhere ever abides in space, know, even so do all beings abide in Me.

The relation of supporter and the thing supported even between two objects not in contact with each other is being stated through an example. *As etc. Just as the wind, though vast and blowing everywhere, ever abides in space, for without space it is not possible for an object to exist, and yet it is not connected with space, as space has no parts and is therefore incapable of any contact (union) with any object, know, even so do all beings abide in Me.*

सर्वभूतानि कोन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।

कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. At the end of a cycle all beings, O son of Kunti, attain My Prakriti; at the beginning of the (next) cycle I again send them forth.

Thus it has been stated that the unattached (Lord) is the cause of sustenance through His mysterious power. That He is also the cause of creation and dissolution through that very

mysterious power, is being stated: *At the end* etc. *At the end of a cycle*, at the time of dissolution, *all beings attain My Prakriti*, get resolved in My Prakriti consisting of the three Gunas. *At the beginning of the (next) cycle*, at the time of creation, *I again send them forth*, create them conspicuously.

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टम्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।

भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Presiding over My Nature (Prakriti), I again and again send forth this entire aggregate of helpless beings, according to their nature.

How do you, who is non-attached and changeless, create? That is being answered: *Presiding* etc. *Resting upon, presiding over, My Nature (Prakriti)* which is under Me, *I again and again send forth diversely this entire fourfold aggregate of beings* that remain merged at the time of dissolution and are *helpless*, dominated by their past actions etc. How do I send them forth? *According to their nature*, on the strength of their respective natures, the result of their past actions.

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबद्धन्ति घनंजय ।

उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥

9. These acts (of creation, etc.) do not bind Me, O Arjuna, who remain unattached to them like one indifferent.

But then, how is it that You who are performing such various actions are not bound by them like the embodied soul? Anticipating such a question the Lord says: *These acts etc. These acts of creation etc. do not bind Me.* Attachment to actions is the cause of bondage. I have not that attachment, being one whose desires are already fulfilled. Therefore, in the case of Myself, *who remain like one indifferent*, they do not lead to bondage. Agency is incompatible with indifference, and indifference with agency; therefore it is stated, 'like one indifferent.'

मयाऽध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।

हेतुनाऽनेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १० ॥

10. Presided over by Me, Prakriti brings forth the world of moving and un-moving things; for this reason, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), the world revolves.

That is being demonstrated: *Presided etc. Presided over by Me*, owing to My presiding over, *Prakriti brings forth*, gives birth to, *the world of moving and un-moving things.* *For this reason*, owing to My presiding over, *this world revolves*, is created

again and again. As My presiding over consists only in My nearness (to Prakriti), agency and indifference (in Me) are not incompatible. This is the sense.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. The ignorant deride Me who have taken a human form, not knowing My higher nature as the great Lord of beings.

Then why don't some people revere You—such a supreme Ruler? It is being answered by the two verses beginning with: *The ignorant etc. Not knowing My higher nature or essence, as the great Lord of all beings, the ignorant, fools, deride Me, disregard Me.* The reason for derision is being stated: Though My form is made of pure Sattva, yet (they disregard Me) because I *have taken a human form* at the instance of My devotees.

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।

राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२ ॥

12. Of vain hopes, of vain efforts, of vain knowledge, thoughtless and taking to

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<sup>1</sup> Being deluded by this human form people think Me to be an ordinary man and deride Me.



the deceptive demoniac and fiendish nature (they deride Me).

Further: *Of vain hopes*, etc. They who are *of vain hopes*, who entertain futile hope that a god other than Myself would grant results sooner, and therefore, whose *efforts* owing to their turning away from Me are *vain*, of no avail; whose *knowledge* of the Scriptures based on fallacious reasoning is *vain*; consequently who are *thoughtless*, whose minds are distracted. The underlying reason for all this is: They take *to the deceptive*, destructive of discrimination, *nature—demoniac* or Tāmasika, predominating in cruelty etc., and *fiendish* or Rājasika, predominating in passion, pride, etc.—they deride Me. The verse is to be construed with these words in the previous one.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ देवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. But the great-souled ones taking to the divine nature, O Pārtha, worship Me with one-pointed devotion, knowing Me to be the cause of all beings and immutable.

Then who worship You? It is being stated: *But* etc. *Great-souled ones*, those who are not overcome by passion etc., for they take *to the divine nature*

which will be stated later as, "Fearlessness, purity of heart" etc. (XVI. 1), and therefore whose minds are not devoted to anything else but Me—they, however, *knowing Me to be the cause of beings*, of the universe, *and immutable or eternal, worship Me*.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ १४ ॥

14. Always praising Me, striving with austere vows, and bowing down to Me with devotion, always steadfast, they worship Me.

The different ways of their worship are being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Always* etc. Some *worship*, adore, *Me* by *always praising Me* with hymns and mystic syllables; some *by striving*, making efforts for the worship etc. of the Lord and the control of the senses, *with austere vows*, rigid rules of conduct; some by *bowing down*, offering salutations, *to Me with devotion*; others worship Me by being *always steadfast*, by constant alertness. The epithets 'with devotion' and 'always steadfast' should be taken as qualifying 'praising', 'striving' etc. as well.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. Worshipping through the knowledge-sacrifice others adore Me, either as identical or as separate, or they adore Me, the manifold, in different forms.

Further: *Worshipping* etc. The realization of Him as the universal Self in the form, "All this is Vāsudeva", is knowledge; that itself is the sacrifice. *Worshipping through that knowledge - sacrifice others adore Me.* Of these, again, some adore Me *as being identical*, thinking themselves to be non-separate from Me; some adore Me *as being separate*, thinking, 'I am His servant'; but some *adore Me, the manifold*, the universal Self, *in different forms*, in the form of Brahmā, Rudra, etc.

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाऽहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्राऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. I am Kratu, I am Yajna, I am the oblation to the Manes, I am the product of annuals, I am the Mantra, I alone am the clarified butter, I am the (sacrificial) fire and the offering in the fire.

His being the universal Self is being declared in the four verses beginning with: *I am* etc. *Kratu*, Vedic sacrifice like the Agnishtoma. *Yajna*, sacrifice prescribed by the Smritis like the five great sacrifices. *The oblation to the manes* like the Shrāddha (offerings to the departed) ceremony. *The product of annuals*, food produced from annual plants; or it may mean medicine. *The Mantra*, mystic words such as those uttered before the performance of the sacrifice and during its performance; *the clarified butter*—the means to the performance of the sacrifice. *Fire*, sacrificial fire such as the Āhavaniya etc. *The offering in the fire*, the ceremony itself. Verily I am all this.

पिताऽहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।

वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ १७ ॥

17. I am the father of this world, the mother, the dispenser, the grandsire, that which is to be known, the purifier, the Om and also the Vedas—Rik, Sāman and Yajus.

Further: *I am* etc. *I am the dispenser*, awarder of the fruits of one's actions. *That which is to be known*, the object to be realized. *The purifier*, sanctifier. *The Om*, the sacred Vedic syllable.

*And also the Rik and other Vedas. The rest is clear.*

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. I am the goal, the sustainer, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the source, the destroyer, the support, the repository and the eternal seed.

Futher: *I am* etc. That which is attained is *the goal*, the fruit of actions. *The sustainer*, nourisher. *The Lord*, the controller. *The witness*, the observer of good and evil. *The abode*, the place of enjoyment. *The refuge*, the protector. *The friend*, one who does good. *The source*, that from which a thing pre-eminently comes into existence, i.e., the creator. *The dissolution*, that by which a thing meets its dissolution, *the destroyer*. *The support*, that in which a thing rests. *The repository*, that in which a thing remains latent. *Seed*, cause, and that too *eternal*, not destructible like seeds of the rice etc.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ १९ ॥

19. I give heat, I restrain and let loose the rain, I am immortality, I am death, I

am manifest and unmanifest also, O Arjuna.

Further: *I give* etc. Existing as the sun, during summer *I give heat* to the world. During the rainy season *I let loose, shower, the rain*. Sometimes *I restrain, withhold, the rain*. *I am immortality* or life, death, destruction, *manifest*, the gross visible universe, *unmanifest*, the subtle invisible universe. Knowing that all this is Myself, they worship Me alone in different forms. The connection is with these words in verse 15.

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा

यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गंति प्रार्थयन्ते ।

ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-

मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २० ॥

20. The knowers of the Vedas, purified from sins by drinking the Soma juice and worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for access to heaven; they having attained the meritorious sphere of Indra, experience in heaven celestial enjoyments of the gods.

In this way it has been shown in the two verses beginning with, "The ignorant deride Me",

etc. (Verse 11), that people who worship other gods with the hope of getting quick results do not regard the Lord, and thereby the non-devotees have been described. And by, "But the greatsouled ones. O Pārtha", etc. (Verse 13), the Lord's devotees have been described. Now, for those who do not worship the Lord Vāsudeva either as identical with or as separate from themselves a succession of births and deaths is inevitable. This is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *The knowers* etc. Traīdyā; The knowers of the three forms of knowledge (the Vedas), viz., Rik, Yajus and Sāman are Trīdyā. 'Traīdyā' is the same as 'Trīdyā', the lengthening of the first vowel introducing no new meaning. Or it may mean: Those who study or know the three forms of knowledge, i.e., those who are devoted to rituals prescribed by the three Vedas. *Worshipping Me with sacrifices* prescribed by the three Vedas—in reality worshipping Me alone in the form of Indra and other gods, though not knowing that they are but manifestations of Myself, *drinking the Soma juice*, the remains of the sacrifice, and by that very act being *purified from sins*, cleansed of all taints, those who *pray for access to heaven—they having attained the meritorious*—attained as a result of virtuous deeds—*sphere of Indra* or heaven, *experience in heaven, celestial, excellent, enjoyments of the gods*.



ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं  
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।

एवं त्रयोधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना

गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ २१ ॥

21. Having enjoyed the extensive heavenly sphere, when their virtue is exhausted, they enter the mortal world. Thus those who take refuge in the religion of the Vedas, desirous of enjoyments, go and come.

And then, *Having enjoyed* etc. *They*, those who desire heaven, *having enjoyed* that *extensive heavenly sphere* desired by them, i.e., its enjoyments, *when their virtue* which led to this enjoyment is *exhausted*, (again) *enter the mortal world*. Again performing *thus*, in the self same way, the sacrifices prescribed by the three Vedas and *desirous of enjoyments*, they *go and come*.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. Those persons, who think of nothing else and worship Me through meditation—the accession to and the maintenance of the welfare of such ever devout persons I look after.

But My devotees become blessed by My grace. This is being stated: *Those persons, etc. Those persons, who think of nothing else, who have no other object of desire than Myself—and worship Me through meditation, the accession to and maintenance of the welfare, the attainment of wealth, etc., and its protection when attained, as also final Liberation, of such ever devout persons, persons who are always exclusively devoted to Me, I Myself look after, see that they get unasked.*

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः ।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. Even those devotees of other gods who worship (them) endowed with faith, worship Me alone, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), though in an unauthorized way.

But then, as there is really no other god than Yourself, the worshippers of Indra and the rest are verily Your devotees; so how do they go and come? It is being answered: *Even* etc It is true that *even those people who, endowed with faith, becoming devotees, worship other gods like Indra and others, worship Me alone.* But they worship in an unauthorized way, without following the enjoined way for Liberation; therefore they go and come.

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।

न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४ ॥

24. I am the enjoyer, and the Lord also, of all sacrifices. But they do not know Me in truth; therefore they fall down.

That very thing is being explained: *I am* etc. *I am the enjoyer of all sacrifices* in the form of those respective deities, and I Myself am the Lord also of all sacrifices, i.e., the bestower of their fruit. *They do not know Me*, who am of this nature, *in truth*, truly. *Therefore they fall down*, i.e., are reborn.—The verb should be *ātmanepadi*.—But those who see Me, the Inner Ruler, in all the gods and worship Me, do not come back.

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods, the worshippers of the manes go to the manes, the worshippers of the spirits go to the spirits, and My worshippers too come to me.

That very thing is being demonstrated: *The worshippers* etc. *The worshippers*, devotees, of the gods, Indra and others, go to the gods who are

limited (beings.) *The worshippers of the manes*, those who perform the Shrāddha and other rites, *go to the manes. The worshippers of the spirits* like Vināyaka and the female demigods, *go to the spirits. My worshippers*, those who are accustomed to worship Me, however, *come to Me* alone, the embodiment of undecaying supreme bliss, Nārāyana.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६ ॥

26. He who with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that devout offering of the pure-minded one I accept.

Thus it has been stated that His own devotees attain undecaying fruit. Now is being shown how easy it is to attain devotion to Him: *He who* etc. *He who with devotion*, with love, *offers Me only a leaf, a flower*, etc., that leaf, flower, etc., of that *pure-minded one*, selfless devotee, offered with devotion, *I enjoy, accept* with pleasure. Unlike the petty gods, I, the supreme Lord possessing superlative powers, am not pleased by expensive sacrifices, but by devotion alone. 'Therefore, what little is offered by the devotee, be it even a leaf etc., I accept just to favour him. This is the idea.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ २७ ॥

27. Whatever you do, or eat, or sacrifice, or give, whatever austerity you perform, that, O son of Kunti, offer unto Me.

Even this leaf, flower, etc., need not be procured with effort just for My sake, like the (sacrificial) animal, Soma plant and other things collected for a sacrifice, and then offered to Me. What then is to be done? That is being stated: *Whatever* etc. *Whatever* action you do, whether natural or prescribed by the Scriptures, likewise whatever you eat, or sacrifice, or give whatever austerity you perform, all that offer unto Me, perform in such a way that it becomes an offering to Me.

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्षयसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ २८ ॥

28. Thus you will be rid of the bonds of action resulting in good and evil; being free and with your mind endowed with the Yoga of renunciation, you will attain Me.

Listen what fruit you will attain in this way: *Thus* etc. Performing work thus, you will be rid of

*the bonds of action, of good and evil fruits resulting from actions; for all actions being offered to Me, your connection with their fruits is impossible. Being free from them (fruits of actions) and with your mind endowed with the Yoga of renunciation consisting in the offering of all actions to Me, you will attain Me.*

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. I am the same to all beings; there is no one hateful or dear to Me; but they who worship Me with devotion, are in Me, and I am also in them.

If You grant Liberation to Your devotees alone and not to non-devotees, then are You also partial through attachment and aversion? No. That is being stated: *I am etc. I am the same to all beings; therefore verily there is no one hateful or dear to Me. Even though it is so, yet they, those devotees, who worship Me, are in Me. I am also in them as their helper. This is the idea: Even as fire, which destroys the misery of darkness, cold, etc., only for those who tend it, is not partial, nor the wishing tree (which grants desired objects only to those who sit under it), so also, though I favour My devotees, there is certainly no*

partiality in Me; it is but the glory of devotion to Me.

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ३० ॥

30. Even if a very wicked person worships Me to the exclusion of anybody else, he should be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

Moreover, the power of devotion to Me is indisputable. Describing it the Lord says: *Even if* etc. *Even if a very wicked person worships Me*, the blessed Nārāyana, alone, and is not devoted to any other god as different from Me, then *he should be regarded as righteous*, as the best; *for he has rightly resolved*, he has made a worthy resolution like, "I shall be blessed by the worship of the Lord alone."

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ३१ ॥

31. He soon becomes righteous-minded and attains eternal peace; O Son of Kunti, proclaim (to the world) that My devotee never perishes.

How could he be regarded as righteous by a mere right resolve? That is being answered: *He*



soon etc. Even a wicked person by worshipping Me soon becomes righteous-minded and thereby attains eternal or everlasting peace, i.e., devotion to the supreme Lord. Arjuna, who is agitated by the doubt that people who are sophisticated and sharp-tongued will not accept this (statement of the Lord) is encouraged by the Lord by saying: "O Arjuna, go to the assembly of the opponents, proclaim unhesitatingly with lusty beat of drums and uplifted hands—how?—that *My*, i.e., the Lord's, devotee, even if very wicked, never perishes, rather he becomes blessed. Then they, with their sophisms smashed by this display of your boldness, would undoubtedly make you alone as their preceptor.

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Even they who are of sinful birth, women, Vaishyas, as also Sudras, taking refuge in Me, verily attain the highest goal.

What is there to wonder at that devotion to Me purifies one who is lax in conduct, when it liberates from transmigratory existence even the low-born and unqualified persons. This is being stated: *Even they* etc. *Even they* who are of sinful birth, of low birth, i.e., the outcastes, etc., and they who are *Vaishyas*, engaged merely in agriculture,

etc., and *women*, *Sudras* and the rest, who are devoid of (Vedic) study, etc.—even they, *taking refuge in Me*, worshipping Me, *verily*, undoubtedly, *attain the highest goal*.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ३३ ॥

.33. Not to mention virtuous Brāhmanas and devoted royal sages. Having attained this ephemeral joyless body, worship Me.

When it is so (i.e., when even the low-born, etc., attain Me through devotion), then it goes without saying that those devotees of Mine who are of noble birth and good conduct attain the highest goal. That is being stated: *Not to mention* etc. It goes without saying that *virtuous Brāhmanas*, Brāhmanas who have done pious deeds, and likewise Kshatriyas who are sages as well as kings, attain the highest goal. Therefore, having got this body of a royal sage, worship Me. Moreover, *having attained this ephemeral*, non-permanent, *joyless* world or *body*, *worship Me* alone without delay, since the body is ephemeral, and giving up all efforts for happiness, since it is joyless.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Fix your mind on Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me and bow down to Me; thus fixing the mind on Me and having Me for the supreme goal, you will attain Me alone.

By showing the method of worship the Lord concludes the subject: *Fix* etc. He whose mind is fixed on Me—be such. Likewise, *be My devotee*, My servant; *sacrifice to Me*, habitually offer sacrifices to Me; *and bow down to Me* alone. Thus, by these methods, *having Me for the supreme goal*, *fixing the self or mind on Me*, concentrating it on Me, *you will attain Me alone*, who am supreme bliss.

In this ninth chapter named the royal secret the Lord has spoken out of His grace about His own transcendental glory and the wonderful greatness of devotion.

**CHAPTER X**  
**MEDITATION ON THE DIVINE GLORIES**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Hear again, O Mighty-armed one, My supreme word, which I, wishing your welfare, shall tell you who take delight in it.

The glories of the Lord have previously been stated in brief in chapters seven, etc. In the tenth these are being expanded for the vision of God in everything.

Thus in the three chapters, the seventh and the next two, the form of the Lord which is to be worshipped has been determined. And His glories have been briefly stated in the seventh chapter in, 'I am, O son of Kunti, sapidity in waters', etc. (VII. 8) and the following verses. In the eighth chapter in the verse, "What is that Brahman, what is Adhyātmā", etc. (VIII. 1) and the next one seven entities have been introduced by Arjuna. They are verily glories of the Lord, since it is

mentioned, "Those who know Me together with what concerns beings", etc. (VII. 30). In the ninth chapter in, "I am Kratu, I am Yajna", etc. (IX. 16) and the following verses, His glories have been pointed out. Now in order to delineate those very glories and state that devotion to the Lord must be practised, *the Blessed Lord said: Hear again, etc. O mighty-armed one, one whose hands are mighty, dexterous in the performance of one's duty like fighting, and service to the great, hear again My word. What kind of word? Supreme word, word relating to the supreme Truth, which I, wishing your welfare, shall tell you who take delight in My words as in nectar.*

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।

अहमादिहि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

2. Neither the gods nor the great sages know My birth; for I am the cause of the gods and the great sages in all respects.

Incomprehensibility is being put forward as the reason for repeating what has already been stated: *Neither etc. Neither the gods nor even the great sages like Bhṛigu and others know My excellent birth—My appearance with various glories, though I am birthless. The reason for that is: For I am*

*the beginning or cause of the gods and the great sages in all respects, i.e., as their creator and as the director of their intellect, etc. Therefore without My grace nobody can know Me. This is the sense.*

यो मामजमनादि च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।

असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

3. He who knows Me, the birthless and beginningless Lord of creatures, is undeluded among men and is freed from all sins.

The result of such self-realization is being stated: *He who etc. He who knows Me, the beginningless, who has no beginning or cause, being verily the cause of everything; therefore, birthless, without birth, and the Lord of all creatures, is undeluded, free from delusion, among men and is freed from all sins.*

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।

सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४ ॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।

भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ५ ॥

4-5. Discrimination, knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-

control, tranquility, happiness, misery, existence, non-existence, fear and also fearlessness, non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, ill-fame—these different dispositions of beings are indeed born of Me.

His being the great Lord of all beings is made clear in the three verses beginning with: *Discrimination*, etc. *Discrimination*, the skill to differentiate the essential from the worthless; *knowledge*, about the Self; *non-delusion*, absence of bewilderment; *forgiveness*, forbearance; *truthfulness*, veracity; *self-control* (*Dama*), control of the external sense-organs; *tranquillity* (*Shama*), control of the internal organ (mind); *happiness*, the sensation of what is agreeable; *misery*, its opposite; *fear*, dread; *fearlessness*, its opposite; *existence*, coming into being; *non-existence*, its opposite. This verse is to be construed with the words 'are indeed born of Me,' in the next verse (4).

Further: *Non-injury*, etc., *non-injury*, refraining from causing pain to others; *equanimity*, absence of attachment, aversion, etc.; *contentment*, satisfaction with what comes by destiny; *austerity*, of the body, etc., to be described later on; *charity*, giving away of wealth, etc., earned by honest means to a worthy person; *fame*,



reputation; *ill-fame*, obloquy. *These different dispositions of beings*, viz., discrimination, knowledge, etc., and their opposites, viz., non-discrimination, etc., *are indeed born of Me* (5).

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।

मद्भावा मानसा जाता.येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६ ॥

6. The seven great sages, the earlier four, and also the Manus, were born of My mind endowed with My essence—whose progeny are these in the world.

Further: *The seven* etc. *The seven great sages*, Bhrigu and others, well known in the Purānas, as stated in texts like, "These have been assorted in the Purānas as the seven Brāhmanas"; *earlier* even than these,—the other *four* great sages—Sanaka and the rest; *and so also the Manus*, Swayambhuva and others, *endowed with My essence*, in whom there existed My power, *were born of My mind*, were born of Myself alone as Hiranyagarbha by My mere wish. That very power is being stated; *Whose progeny*, etc. *Whose*, i.e., of Bhrigu and other sages, of Sanaka and the rest, and of the (fourteen) Manus, *progeny*, these Brāhmanas and others, multiplying *in the world* as sons, grandsons, etc., or as disciples, grand disciples, etc., as the case may be.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He who knows in truth this glory and power of Mine, attains unflinching Yoga; there is no doubt about this.

The fruit of a true knowledge of the glories that have been expounded is being stated: *He who etc. He who knows in truth this glory of Mine as Bhrigu and others and power as lordship, attains unflinching, certain, Yoga, complete realization; there is no doubt about this.*

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।

इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

8. I am the source of all, everything is produced out of Me, knowing thus the wise worship Me with devotion.

How through the knowledge of (this) glory and power (of the Lord) complete realization is attained, is being shown in four verses beginning with: *I am etc. I am the source of all the world through My glories, Bhrigu and others; everything, viz., discrimination, knowledge, non-delusion, etc., of the world is produced out of Me—knowing, realizing, thus the wise, the discriminative, worship Me with devotion, with love.*

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥

9. With their mind and senses directed to Me, explaining Me to each other, and talking of Me—they are always pleased and happy.

That worship with devotion is being described: *With their mind* etc. Whose *mind* is on *Me* alone; whose *Prānas* or *senses* are directed to, have attained, *Me* alone; or *Madgataprāna* may mean, who have dedicated their life to Me. Such wise people *explaining Me to each other* through scriptural and other authority backed by reasoning, and after understanding, *talking of Me* singing My praise, *they are always pleased*, contented with others' approval, and happy, delighted.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १० ॥

10. To these who are (thus) ever devoted to Me and worship Me with love, I give that Yoga of understanding by which they come unto Me.

And to such persons as these I grant complete realization. That is being stated: *To these* etc.

*To these who are thus ever devoted, attached, to Me and worship Me with love, I give that Yoga or means of understanding. To what does 'that' refer? To the means by which these devotees of Mine attain Me.*

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्दात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

11. Just to bless them, I, residing in their intellect, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the resplendent light of knowledge.

And having given him the Yoga of understanding, I make it last till he attains realization, and destroy his mundane existence that results from ignorance. This is being stated: *Just to bless etc. Just to bless, favour, them, I destroy the darkness called mundane world, born of ignorance.* Remaining where, or by what means do You destroy the darkness? That is being answered: *Residing in their self, in the functions of their intellect, and by the resplendent, shining, light of knowledge.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।

पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ १२ ॥

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।

असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३ ॥

Arjuna said:

12-13. You are the supreme Brahman, the supreme abode and extremely holy. All sages, the divine sage Nārada, (as also) Asita, Devala and Vyāsa call You the eternal, resplendent Being, the primeval Deity, birthless and omnipresent. And You too are telling me so.

— *Arjuna*, wishing to know in detail about the glories of the Lord that have already been stated in brief, *said*, praising the Lord, in seven verses beginning with: *You are* etc. *You alone are the supreme Brahman, the supreme abode or refuge, and extremely holy.* Why? That is being answered: For they call *You the everlasting or eternal Being likewise resplendent, shining and self-effulgent Being; the primeval Deity, i.e., the origin of the gods; likewise they call You alone birthless and omnipresent, all-pervading. Who call You so? All sages, Bhṛigu and others, the divine sage. Nārada, (as also) Asita, Devala and Vyāsa. And you too are personally telling me so.*

सर्वमेतद्वत्तं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।

न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४ ॥

14. All this and what (else) You say unto me, O Keshava, I regard as true; O Lord, verily, neither the gods nor the demons know Your manifestations.

Therefore my misgivings about Your powers are now gone. That is being stated: *All this* etc., *All this*, that You are the supreme Brahman, etc., *I regard as true. And what You say unto me*, viz., "Even the gods do not know My birth", etc., (verse 2), I also regard as true indeed. This is being said: *Verily, the gods*, etc. *O Lord, neither the gods know* that these *manifestations* of Yours are for favouring them, *nor do the demons know* that they are for their punishment.

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।

भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ १५ ॥

15. You alone know Yourself by yourself, O best of persons, O creator of beings, O Lord of beings, O God of gods, O Lord of the universe.

What then? *You alone* etc. *You alone know Yourself*<sup>1</sup> and not anybody else; that, too, You know *by Yourself* and not by any other means.

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1. In Your dual aspect, as the Lord possessing unsurpassed powers and glories and also as the unconditioned Self.

Out of surpassing reverence Arjuna addresses (the Lord) variously. *O best of persons*: Furnishing a reason for this are the other vocative epithets—*O creator, generator, of beings*: *O Lord, ruler, of beings*: *O God of gods*, the revealer of (shining) gods such as the sun; *O Lord of the universe*, protector of the world.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ १६ ॥

16. Verily, You alone can fully tell about Your divine glories, through which pervading all these worlds You exist.

As You Yourself know Your manifestations, and not the gods or others, therefore, *Verily*, etc. All those *divine*, wonderful, *glories* of Yours, *You alone can tell*, are fit to tell. *Through which* etc., qualifies 'glories'; its meaning is clear.

कथं विद्यामहं योगिस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।

केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ १७ ॥

17. In what ways always thinking of You, O Yogin, can I know You? In which particular objects are You to be meditated upon by me?



Showing the need for telling, he prays in the two verses beginning with: *In what ways* etc. *O Yogi, in what ways, through which particular glories of Yours, always thinking of You, can I know You?* Though You are to be meditated upon through Your different glories, *in which particular objects, are You to be meditated upon by me?*

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनादन ।

भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. O Janārdana, tell me once more in detail about Your powers and glories; for I am not satiated by listening to Your nectar-like words.

So tell me in detail (about Your powers and glories) in such a way that even a mind that is not introspective can contemplate You alone in different objects through Your diverse glories. This is being said: *Tell me, etc. Tell me once more in detail about Your powers, Yogic splendours like omniscience and omnipotence, and glories, for I am not satiated, I do not feel as having heard enough, by listening to Your nectar-like words.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ १९ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

19. All right, I shall tell you about My principal divine glories, O best of the Kurus (Arjuna); for there is no end to the details of My glories.

Being thus prayed to (by Arjuna), *the Blessed Lord said: All right*, etc. 'All right' (Hanta) is a compassionate term of address. Of My *divine glories I shall tell you the principle ones*; since *there is no end to the details of My minor glories*, therefore I shall tell (you) a few major ones.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ २० ॥

20. I am, O Gudākesha, the Self residing in the minds of all creatures; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of beings.

Now, to begin with, He describes the nature of the Lord: *I am*, etc. *O Gudākesha, I am the supreme Self, residing as the controller endued with qualities like omniscience in the minds, the internal organs, of all creatures. Beginnings, origin; the middle, continuance; the end, destruction; that is, I alone am the cause of the origin, etc., of all beings.*

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।

मरीचिर्महतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ २१ ॥

21. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, of luminaries I am the radiant sun, of the Maruts I am Marichi, and among constellations I am the moon.

Now from this verse beginning with, *Of the Ādityas* etc., till the end of the chapter He relates His glories. *Of the twelve Ādityas I am Viṣṇu, Vāmana; of luminaries, shining objects, I am the radiant sun* that possesses rays pervading the universe; *of the Maruts, a particular class of gods, I am the one named Marichi*; or it may mean: *Of the seven groups of winds, viz., Āvaha, Pravaha, Vivaha, Parāvaha, Udvaha, Samvaha and Parivaha<sup>1</sup>, I am Marichi (Āvaha); among constellations I am the moon.* In, 'Of Ādityas I am Vishnu', etc., the sixth case-ending is mostly partitive. In some, however, as in, 'In beings I am consciousness', the sixth case-ending is possessive. We shall show this while explaining those particular verses. Even with regard to Incarnations like Vishnu, the intention being only to refer to their superlative power, they are mentioned as glories. Though from now on the

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<sup>1</sup> Names of the seven groups of winds or bands of air of the atmospheric region between earth and heaven.

meaning of the chapter is quite clear, we shall comment briefly here and there.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।

इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ २२ ॥

22. Of the Vedas I am the Sāma Veda, of the gods I am Indra, of the senses I am the mind, and in beings I am consciousness.

*Of the Vedas* etc. Vāsava, Indra. With reference to *beings* I am *consciousness*, the faculty of knowledge.

रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।

वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. Of the Rudras I am Sankara, of the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Kubera, of the Vasus I am Fire, and among mountains I am Meru.

*Of the Rudras* etc. In the phrase, 'of the Yakshas and Rakshasas', Rakshasas are enumerated with the Yakshas, since the two are alike as regards cruelty, etc. Amongst them I am the lord of wealth—Kubera. Pāvaka, Fire. Of things possessing peaks—of lofty objects, i.e., of mountains, I am Meru.

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।

सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥ २४ ॥

24. Know that I am Brihaspati, the foremost among priests, O Pārtha; of army leaders I am Skanda, of natural reservoirs I am the ocean.

*Know that etc. Among priests know that I am Brihaspati the foremost one, he being the priest of the gods; of army leaders', generals, I am Skanda (Kārtikeya), the commander-in-chief of the gods; of stationary reservoirs of water, I am the ocean.*

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।

यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Of the great sages I am Bhrigu, of words I am the monosyllable (Om), of sacrifices I am the Japa sacrifice, of immovables I am the Himālayas.

*Of the great etc. Of words, speech consisting of words, I am the monosyllable, the word called Om; of sacrifices prescribed by the Sruti and the Smṛiti I am the Japa<sup>1</sup> sacrifice.*

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<sup>1</sup> Japa is more or less silent repetition of mystic syllables or names of the Lord.

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।

गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ २६ ॥

26. Of all trees I am the Ashvattha (peepul tree), of divine sages I am Nārada, of Gandharvas I am Chitraratha, and amongst perfect souls I am the saint Kapila.

*Of all trees etc.* Amongst those who, while being gods, have become sages by being seers of Vedic hymns, *I am Nārada*; amongst perfect souls, amongst those who from their very birth are knowers of Truth, *I am the saint called Kapila.*

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।

ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ २७ ॥

27. Of horses know Me to be Uchchaihshravas born of (the churning for) nectar, of lordly elephants Airāvata, and amongst men the king.

*Of horses etc.* Know that the horse called *Uchchaihshravas* that arose out of the ocean of milk, when it was churned (by the gods and demons) for obtaining nectar, is My glory. The term 'born of (the churning for) nectar' agrees with 'Airāvata' also. Know Me to be the ruler of men, *the king.*

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।

प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ २८ ॥

28. Of weapons I am the thunderbolt, of cows I am the Kāmadhenu, I am the productive passion, and of poisonous serpents I am Vāsuki.

*Of weapons etc. Of weapons (I am) the thunderbolt. Kāmadhenu, (Vasishtha's) cow (called Surabhi) yielding all desired objects. I am the productive passion that is meant for the begetting of offspring; but that passion which only seeks enjoyment is not My glory, for it is prohibited by the Scriptures<sup>1</sup>. Of poisonous serpents I am their king Vāsuki.*

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।

पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. Among non-poisonous snakes I am Ananta, of aquatic beings I am Varuna, of the manes I am Aryaman, of regulators I am Yama.

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<sup>1</sup> The Scripture enjoins on all householders to beget sons so that the departed ancestors may not go without the funeral cakes offered to the manes at the Shrāddha ceremony. So it was a sacred duty on all to keep the line of descent in tact. But sexual enjoyment for its own sake only panders to the senses and is prohibited by the Scriptures.



*Among etc. Among non-poisonous snakes I am their king Ananta or Sesha; of aquatic beings, dwellers in water, I am their king Varuna; of the manes I am their king Aryaman; of regulators, of those who mete out punishment, I am Yama.*

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।

मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३० ॥

30. Of demons I am Prahlāda, of reckoners I am time, among beasts I am the lion, and among birds I am Garuda.

*Of demons, etc. I am Prahlāda<sup>1</sup>, the king of the demons; of subduers, or it may mean, of reckoners I am time; the king of beasts or the lion; among birds I am the son of Vinatā or Garuda (the king of birds).*

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।

झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

31. I am the wind among those who move fast, of wielders of weapons I am Rāma, among fish I am the Makara, of rivers I am the Gangā.

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<sup>1</sup> Prahlada, though born among demons, was a great devotee of the Lord.

*I am* etc. Of purifiers, or according to another interpretation, *among those who move fast, I am the wind: of wielders of weapons, among heroes, I am Rāma, the son of Dasaratha, or it may refer to Parashurāma; among fish I am that particular species called Makara: of rivers, of running waters, I am the Gangā.*

सर्गणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Of creations I am the beginning, the end, as also the middle, O Arjuna; of sciences I am metaphysics, and I am the constructive reasoning of the controversialists.

*Of creations* etc. Those that are created are creations, viz., the ether etc.; of these *I am the beginning, the end and the middle.* In, "I am the beginning, the middle", etc. (verse 20) the Lord's agency in creation, etc. was stated. Here, however, it is being stated that creation, preservation and destruction are to be meditated upon as the Lord's glories. This is the difference between the two verses. *Metaphysics*, the science of the Self. Three kinds of discussions are well known with respect to controversialists, viz., Vāda, Jalpa and Vitandā. Of these *I am Vāda or constructive reasoning.* Jalpa is that mode of

debate by which both parties establish their own viewpoint through direct and indirect proofs, and refute the view of the opponent through circumvention (Chhala) and false generalization (Jāti) and by pointing out unfitness (of the opponent) to be argued with (Nigraha-sthāna). But where one party establishes his viewpoint, and the other refutes it through circumvention, false generalization and showing the unfitness of the opponent to be argued with without establishing his own view, that is termed Vitandā. Of these, Jalpa and Vitandā result only in a trial of strength between the opponents, who are both desirous of victory. But the result of Vāda is the ascertainment of truth between the teacher and the disciple or between others, both unbiased. This being the best, it is My glory<sup>1</sup>. This is the meaning.

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।

अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Of letters I am the letter A and of compounds I am the Dvandva; I Myself am eternal time, I am the universal dispenser.

*Of letters etc. Of letters, the alphabet, I am the letter A for it, representing all speech, is the*

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<sup>1</sup> Since the best in everything is the Lord's glory.

best. As the Sruti says: "Verily the letter A is all speech. It is this that takes many and various forms when manifested from different parts of the body (the throat, palate, etc.)." *Of compounds*, of the group of compounds, *I am the Dvandva* compound, e.g., 'Rama-Krishna', for both the terms in it being of equal importance, it is the best. *I Myself am eternal*, ever flowing, *time*. In, "Of reckoners I am time", etc. (Verse 30), the time referred to is the reckoner of life's span, as the hundred years' longevity, etc. (i.e., finite time). That time is exhausted when the duration of life in question is exhausted. But here the ever-flowing, infinite time is referred to. This is the difference<sup>1</sup>. Of the dispensers of the fruit of actions *I am the universal*—lit. with faces everywhere—*dispenser*, i.e., I am the dispenser of the fruit of all actions.

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।

कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेघा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४ ॥

34. I am the all-destroying death, the prosperity of potentially prosperous beings, amongst women I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude and forgiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., there is no repetition of the same idea, which is a defect in the exposition of a subject.

*I am etc. Amongst destroyers, I am the all destroying death; of potentially prosperous beings, of those beings who are to be prosperous in future, I am prosperity; amongst women I am the seven goddesses—fame, etc. These women—fame etc.—through whose mere trace people become praise-worthy, are My glories.*

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।

मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Of the Vedic lyrics also I am the Brihat Sāma, of metres I am the Gāyatri, of months I am the Agrahāyana, of seasons I am the spring.

*Of the Vedic lyrics etc. The Brihat Sāma, which is sung in the hymn, “(O Indra) we praise you alone”, etc. (R. V. 6. 46. 1). As Indra is praised as the Lord of everything in that hymn, it is the best. Of hymns composed in metres I am the Gāyatri hymn, for it is the best, since it effects Brāhmananood and is sung at the time of fetching the Soma plant. Flowery season or spring.*

द्यूत छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।

जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Of those who deceive I am gambling, I am the prowess of the powerful, I am victory, I am effort, and I am the goodness of the good.

*Of those etc. Of, relating to, those who deceive, defraud one another, I am gambling; of the powerful, valorous, I am the prowess; of the victorious, I am victory; Of the enterprising, the energetic, I am effort, enterprise; of the good, the Sāttvika people, I am the goodness.*

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।

मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Of the Vrishnis I am Vāsudeva, of the Pāṇḍavas I am Dhananjaya (Arjuna), of sages I am Vyāsa, of seers I am the seer Ushanas.

*Of Vrishnis etc. I am Vāsudeva, who am now instructing you; yourself, Dhananjaya, are My glory; of sages, of those who contemplate on the meaning of the Vedas, I am Vedavyāsa (who classified the Vedas); of seers, of the omniscient, I am the seer named Ushanas, i.e., Shukra (the preceptor of the Asuras or demons).*

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।

मीनं चेवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Of punishers I am the rod, of those desirous of victory I am policy, of secrets also I am silence, I am the knowledge of the wise.

*Of punishers etc. Of punishers*, regarding those that chastise, *I am the rod*; that rod by which the unruly become controlled is My glory. *Of those desirous of victory I am policy* consisting of reconciliation<sup>1</sup>, etc. *Of secrets*, with regard to mysteries, *I am silence* or absence of speech, which keeps a secret. Verily the intention of one who keeps silent is not known. *I am the knowledge of the wise*, that belongs to men of realization.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ३९ ॥

39. I am also, O Arjuna, that which is the germ of all beings; there is no being, moving or stationary, which can exist without Me.

*I am etc. I am also that which is the germ*, the cause of germination (propagation), *of all beings*. The reason is: *There is no being, moving or stationary, which can exist without Me*.

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<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation, bribery, dissension and punishment are four methods adopted by kings against enemies.



नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।

एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥ ४० ॥

40. O tormentor of foes, there is no end to My divine glories; these details of My glories I have only stated in brief.

The subject matter of the chapter is being concluded: *O tormentor of foes*, etc. As My glories are infinite, it is not possible to state them in detail. *I have only stated in brief these details of My glories.*

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशंसंभवम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Whatever thing is glorious, excellent or pre-eminent, verily, know that is born of a portion of My splendour.

The Lord again says in a somewhat comprehensive way to Arjuna who is still eager to hear: *Whatever thing* etc. *Whatever thing is glorious, powerful, excellent, graceful, or pre-eminent*, distinguished by some quality like grandeur or strength—*know that that very thing is born of a portion of My splendour or grandeur.*

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।

विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. But of what avail is it to you to know all these details; I exist pervading this entire universe by a portion of Myself.

But of what avail is this limited vision of Myself? Better see Me in everything. This is being stated: *But of what* etc. *Of what avail is it to you to know all (these details)*, to know all this separately, when *I* alone exist, supporting or pervading, this entire universe by a portion, only a fraction, of Myself? There is nothing else besides Me. For the Sruti says. "All creatures are but a quarter of this Being" (Rig. V. 10. 90. 3).

Even though the mind runs after external objects through the gates of the senses, to enjoin seeing God in everything, the Lord has stated His glories in the tenth chapter.

## THE VISION OF THE UNIVERSAL FORM

अर्जुन उवाच ।

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।

यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna Said:

1. By the supreme and secret discourse known as Adhyātmā that You have delivered for favouring me, this delusion of mine has been destroyed

The Lord Hari, having declared out of extreme compassion the greatness of His glory, next showed His universal form to Arjuna, who was eager to see it.

At the end of the last chapter in, "I exist pervading this entire universe by a portion of Myself," the universal form of the Lord has been mentioned. *Arjuna*, who desired to see it, applauded what had been spoken before (by the Lord) and said in the four verses beginning with: *By the supreme* etc. *By the supreme*, devoted to the highest reality, discourse known as *Adhyātmā*, dealing with the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self, which

though *secret*, esoteric, *You have delivered for favouring me*, for removing my grief—i.e., the talk beginning from, “You have been sorrowing for those who should not be grieved for”, etc. (II. 11), and ending with the sixth chapter—*this delusion of mine*, consisting in erroneous ideas like, ‘I am the slayer’, ‘These are slain’, *has been removed or destroyed*, since the Self has been taught to be a non-agent, etc.

भवाप्ययो हि भूतानां श्रुतो विस्तरशो मया ।

त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

2. Verily, about the origin and dissolution of beings I have heard from You in detail, as also, O Lotus-eyed one, about Your inexhaustible greatness.

Further: *Verily*, etc. That *the origin and dissolution*, creation and destruction, *of beings* are from You alone, *I have heard from You in detail* again and again, in verses like, “I am the origin of the entire universe as also its destroyer”, etc. (VII. 6). *O lotus-eyed one*, one having large beaming eyes like lotus petals. *I have also heard about Your undecaying or inexhaustible greatness*. The idea is this: Though You are an agent in the creation, etc., of the universe, the ruler of everything, the prompter of all good and evil actions, and the dispenser of varied results like

bondage and Liberation, yet of Your immeasurable greatness consisting in changelessness, impartiality, non-attachment and indifference, etc. I have also heard from statements like: "The ignorant regard Me, the unmanifest, as coming into being" (VII, 24); "All this is pervaded by Me" (IX.4); "These acts (of creation, etc.), do not bind Me" (XI.9); "I am the same to all beings", etc. (IX.29). Therefore, as the embodied beings are all dependent on You, my delusion of the type, 'I am the doer', has been removed.

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३ ॥

3. What You say about Yourself, O great Lord, is just so; O best of persons, I desire to see Your Divine form.

Further: *What you* etc. I have heard before (Your statement), "I am the origin of the entire universe as also its destroyer" (VII.6). And *what You now say about Yourself*, "I exist pervading this entire universe by a portion of Myself", etc., *O great Lord, is just so*. That is, about this also I have no doubt. Still, *O best of persons*, out of curiosity, *I desire to see Your Divine form*, endowed with knowledge, lordship, power, strength, prowess and splendour.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Lord, if You think that (form of Yours) can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yogis, show me Your eternal Self.

You need not show me that Divine form just because I wish to see it. What, then?—*If You etc. O Lord of Yoga, i.e., of the Yogis, if You think that form of Yours can be seen by me, i.e., by Arjuna, then show (me) Yourself, immutable or eternal that You are, as possessing that form.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।

नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

5. See My various divine forms, O Pārtha, of diverse hues and shapes, by the hundreds and thousands.

Being thus requested, *the Blessed Lord*, proceeding to show His most wonderful form, *said* to Arjuna in effect, “Be careful!”—in the four verses beginning with: *See My* etc. Though the form is one, yet as it had different varieties, the plural—‘forms’—is used. *See My various*, of different

types, *divine*, supernatural, *forms of diverse hues*—white, black, etc.—*and shapes*, particular arrangement of parts, (*by the hundred and thousands*), infinite in number.

पश्यादित्यान्वसून् रुद्रानश्विनी मरुतस्तथा ।

बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६ ॥

6. See the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Asvins and the Maruts; see many wonderful (forms) never seen before, O descendant of Bharata.

Those (forms) are being enumerated: See etc. *See the Adityas*, etc., in My body. *Maruts*—forty-nine gods of a particular type. Forms *never seen before* either by you or by others. *Wonderful*, marvellous.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।

मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ ७ ॥

7. See this day the entire universe with movable and immovable objects united here in this My body, O Gudākesha (Arjuna), and anything else that you like to see.

Further: *See this day* etc. *See this day*, this very moment, *the entire universe with movable and*



*immovable objects united, integrated as different parts, here in this My body, which (universe) it is impossible to see even in tens of millions of years by a person wandering about from place to place; and see also anything else that you like to see, things such as the Cause which is the substratum of the world, particular states of the world, victory and defeat.*

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् । ८ ॥

8. But you will not be able to see Me just with these eyes of yours; I am giving unto you the celestial eye, behold My divine miracle.

With respect to what Arjuna said, "If you think I can see", etc., it is stated: *But you etc. But you will not be able to see Me just with these physical eyes of yours. Therefore I am giving unto you the celestial eye, supernatural eye of illumination. Behold My divine Yoga or miracle, the marvellous capacity of bringing to pass things that have never taken place.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।

दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ९ ॥

Sanjaya said:

9. O king, having spoken thus, Hari, the great lord of Yoga, next showed to Pārtha the supreme divine form.

*Having spoken thus, the Lord showed His (universal) form to Arjuna. Seeing that form, Arjuna addressed Sri Krishna—this is what Sanjaya said to Dhritarāshtra in the six verses beginning with: Having spoken thus, etc. O king Dhritarāshtra, Hari, the great Lord of Yoga showed the supreme divine form.*

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।

अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ १० ॥

10. Having many mouths and eyes, and containing many a wonderful sight, with many heavenly ornaments and wielding many heavenly uplifted weapons.

Of what nature was (this form)? That is being stated: *Having* etc. In which there were many mouths and eyes, many a wonder to see, many heavenly ornaments and many heavenly uplifted weapons.

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधर दिव्यगंधानुलेपनम् ।

सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. Wearing celestial garlands and apparel, anointed with heavenly perfumes, full of wonders, resplendent, infinite and having faces on every side.

Further: *Wearing* etc. (A form) which was *wearing celestial garlands and apparel, anointed with heavenly perfumes, having exquisitely scented unctions, full of wonders, abounding in many a marvel, resplendent, self-effulgent, infinite, unlimited, in which there were faces everywhere.*

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।

यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्यादभासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥

12. If the effulgence of a thousand suns were to appear in the skies simultaneously, it might compare somewhat with the splendour of that great form.

The incomparable nature of the effulgence of the divine form is being stated: *If* etc. *If the effulgence of a thousand suns, simultaneously risen, were to appear in the skies simultaneously, then it might compare somewhat with the splendour of that great or universal form.* That is to say, there is no other parallel, “(Hari) showed” such a “(form)” *ante* (verse 9)—this is the connection of these verses.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३ ॥

13. Then the son of Pāṇḍu saw the entire universe with its manifold divisions united there, in the body of the God of gods.

What happened after that? In answer Sanjaya said: *Then etc. Then the son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna, saw in the body of the God of gods the entire universe with its manifold divisions, which exists in manifold divisions, co-ordinated in sections as different parts of that one body.*

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः ।

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥ १४ ॥

14. Then Dhananjaya, filled with wonder and his hairs standing on end, bowing his head before the Lord said with joined palms.

Having seen thus what did Arjuna do? That is being stated: *Then Dhananjaya, etc. Then, after seeing it, struck or filled with wonder, Dhananjaya, whose hairs were standing on end through joy, bowing his head before the same Lord said with joined palms.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे

सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।

ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ

मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५ ॥

Arjuna said:

15. In Your body, O Lord, I see the gods, as also all the hosts of various beings, Brahmā, the ruler seated on his lotus-seat, all the heavenly sages and serpents.

What he (Arjuna) spoke is stated in these seventeen verses: *In Your body, etc. O Lord, in Your body I see the gods, the Ādityas and others, as also all the hosts of various beings, viviparous, oviparous, etc.; as also the heavenly sages, Vasishtha and others, and serpents, Takshaka, etc.; so also the ruler, the lord, of those gods and others, viz., Brahmā—of what description?—seated on Mount Meru, the pericarp of the earth-lotus; or it may mean, seated on the lotus rising from Your navel.*

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं

पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।

नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादि

पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

16. I see You with many hands, bellies, mouths and eyes, possessing infinite forms on every side; O Lord of the universe, O You of universal form, I see, however, neither Your end, nor middle nor Your beginning.

Further: *I see* etc. *I see You* as having many hands, etc.; I see You as *possessing infinite forms on every side*; but I do not see *Your end, middle or beginning*, for You are all-pervading.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च

तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।

पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ताद्

दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. I see You all around with the diadem, mace and disc, a mass of light resplendent on all sides, blinding, with the effulgence of the blazing fire and sun, and immeasurable.

Further: *I see* etc. *I see You* all around possessed of the diadem, mace and disc, a mass of light resplendent on all sides, blinding, impossible to see. The reason for this: (I see You as one) whose

*effulgence* or lustre is like that of the blazing fire and sun, and therefore *immeasurable*, i.e., impossible to decide that You are such and such.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं

त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता

सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ १८ ॥

18. You are the imperishable, the Supreme, the thing to be known, You are the supreme resting place of this universe, You are undecaying and the preserver of the eternal religion; I regard You as the primeval Being.

Since Your lordly power is thus beyond conception, therefore, it is stated: *You are etc. You alone are the Imperishable, the supreme Brahman—of what nature?—the thing to be known by seekers of Liberation. You alone are the supreme resting place, the refuge par excellence, of this universe; therefore You are undecaying, everlasting, the preserver, protector, of the timeless or eternal religion. I regard You as the primeval, ancient, Being.*



अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-

मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।

पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं

स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९ ॥

19. I see You as one with no beginning, middle, or end, of infinite prowess, with infinite arms, with the sun and moon for Your eyes and the blazing fire in Your mouths, scorching this universe with Your radiance.

Further: *I see You etc. I see You as one with no beginning, middle, or end, without birth, continuity, or dissolution, of infinite prowess or power, with infinite powerful arms, and the sun and moon for Your eyes, and also as having the blazing fire in Your mouths, scorching, burning, this universe with Your radiance.*

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि

व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।

दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं

लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २० ॥

20. This space betwixt heaven and earth is pervaded by You only, as also all

the quarters; seeing this wonderful terrible form of Yours, the three worlds are extremely afflicted, O great Soul.

Further: *This space* etc. *This space betwixt heaven and earth, the sky, is pervaded by You only, as also are all the quarters; seeing this wonderful, not seen before, fierce, terrible, form of Yours, the three worlds are extremely afflicted, very much frightened. The connection is with 'I see' in the preceding verse.*

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति

केचिद्भोताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।

स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः

स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१ ॥

21. Verily, these hosts of gods are entering into You, some being frightened are praising You with joined palms, while the bands of great sages and perfected souls, uttering the word 'peace', are praising You with numerous hymns.

Further: *Verily, etc. Those hosts of gods being frightened are entering into You, are taking refuge in You. Of these, some being frightened are praising You from a distance with joined palms saying,*

“Glory to You, save us, O save us!” The rest is clear.

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या

विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।

गन्धर्वयक्षामुरसिद्धसङ्घा

वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२ ॥

22. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus and the Sādhyas, the Vishvadevas, the two Asvins, the Maruts, the manes, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the Asuras and, bands of Siddhas—all these are verily looking at You aghast.

Further: *The Rudras, etc. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the gods called Sādhyas, the two Asvins, the Maruts and those who imbibe the vapour (of food), i.e., the manes<sup>1</sup>,—for the Sruti says, “The manes take in the vapour (of hot food)”, and the Smriti also says, “The manes take the food so long as it is hot, (the guests) eat silently, and the food is not praised”<sup>2</sup> (Manu 3. 237)—the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the Asuras, Virochana and others, and bands of Siddhas—all these are verily looking at You aghast.*

<sup>1</sup> lit. those who take hot food and drinks.

<sup>2</sup> By the guests, on being asked by the host if it tastes good.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं

महाबाहो बहुबाहूरूपादम् ।

बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकारालं

दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाऽहम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. O mighty-armed one, seeing Your great form consisting of many mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, and many bellies, and fearful with many tusks, the worlds are awe-struck, and so am I.

Further: *O mighty-armed one, etc. Seeing Your great, mighty, form all the worlds are awe-struck, extremely frightened; so also am I awe-struck. Seeing what kind of form? That form in which there are many mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, and many bellies, and fearful, distorted, that is to say, fierce, with many tusks.*

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं

व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।

दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा

धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४ ॥

24. O Vishnu, seeing You touching the sky, blazing, of many hues, with gaping mouths and large fiery eyes, I am

frightened at heart, and I feel neither fortitude nor peace.

It is not that I am merely frightened, but also, *O Vishnu*, etc. *Touching the sky*, pervading the region between heaven and earth; *blazing*, glowing; *of many hues*, multi-coloured; having *gaping mouths* and many *large fiery eyes*: *Seeing You* of this form, *I am frightened at heart*, and *I feel neither fortitude*, steadiness, *nor peace*, equanimity.

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि

दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।

दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म

प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५ ॥

25. Seeing verily Your mouths fearful with teeth, and blazing like the fire of dissolution, I know not the cardinal points, nor do I find pleasure; O Lord of the gods, O abode of the universe, be merciful.

Further: *Seeing* etc. *O Lord of the gods*, seeing *Your mouths*, *I*, overcome with fear, *know not the cardinal points*, *nor do I find pleasure*, happiness. *O abode of the universe*, be merciful (propitious).

What kind of mouths? *Fearful with teeth and blazing like the fire of dissolution*<sup>1</sup>.

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः

सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।

भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथाऽसौ

सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति

दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।

केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु

संहृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

26-27. All those sons of Dhritarāshtra along with hosts of kings, Bhishma, Drona, as also that charioteer's son (Karna) together with the principal warriors on our side, are entering in a rush into Your terrible jaws fearful with teeth; some are seen sticking in the interstices of the teeth with their heads smashed.

Seeing now what the Lord had said in, "And see anything else that you like to see" (Verse 7), meaning, "See also in My body the

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<sup>1</sup> That consumes the universe at the end of a cycle.

coming victory or defeat, etc., in this war.” Arjuna said in the five verses beginning with: *All those etc. All those sons of Dhritarāshtra, Duryodhana and others, along verily with hosts of kings, such as Jayadratha—they are to be construed with the words ‘are entering into Your jaws’ in the next verse. So also Bhishma, Drona and that charioteer’s son, Karna. It is not they alone who are entering, but (they are doing so) together with their opponents, the principal warriors on our side, like Shikhandi and Dhrishtadyumna (26).*

*All these are entering in a rush, running, into Your terrible jaws, fearful, distorted, with teeth. Of these, some are seen sticking in the interstices of the teeth with their heads smashed (27).*

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः

समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।

तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा

विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८ ॥

28. As many currents of water from rivers flow towards the sea alone, even so do those heroes in the world of men enter Your mouths, flaming all round.

The (heroes’) entrance itself (into the Lord’s mouth) is being illustrated: *As etc. As many*



*currents of water from rivers that flow through multiple channels proceed towards the sea and enter into it alone, even so do those heroes in the world of men enter Your mouths, flaming, blazing, all round.*

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा

विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-

स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ २९ ॥

29. As moths enter a blazing fire with great speed only to be destroyed, even so are these people also entering into Your mouths with great speed just to be destroyed.

The example of the river has been given with respect to entering out of helplessness into the Lord's mouth. Now an example is given with respect to conscious entering: *As* etc. *As moths* or locusts, *with great speed* consciously enter a blazing, flaming fire, *only to be destroyed, even so are these people also entering into Your mouths.*

लोलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता-

ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनेर्ज्वलद्भिः ।

तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं

भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३० ॥

30. You are licking all these people on all sides while devouring them with Your flaming mouths; filling the entire world with its radiance, Your fierce glow is scorching it, O Vishnu.

What then? That is being stated: *You are licking etc. You are licking, eating completely, all these people, heroes, on all sides while devouring, swallowing—with what?—with Your flaming mouths. Further, O Vishnu, Your glow, brilliance, filling or pervading, the entire world with its radiance, effulgence, and becoming fierce, is scorching, burning, it.*

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्रहूपो

नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।

विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं

न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Tell me who You are, of ferocious form; salutations to You; O great God, be pleased. I like to know You, the primeval Being; for I do not comprehend Your inclination.

As it is so, therefore, *Tell me etc. Tell me who You are, of ferocious form; salutations to You; O*

*great God, be pleased, gracious. I like to know You, the primeval Being, fully for I do not comprehend Your inclination, attempt, why You are acting thus. Or it may mean: I have not even a scent of You, who are like this.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धो

लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे

येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥

32. I am the terrible Time, the destroyer of people, and am here proceeding to destroy them; even without you, all these warriors in every division shall cease to be.

Being thus prayed to, the Blessed Lord said in three verses beginning with: *I am* etc. *I am the terrible, fierce, Time, the destroyer of people; and am here, in this world, proceeding to destroy them, the people. Even without you, as their slayer, they shall cease to be, to live. Even though they are not to be slain by you, yet, being devoured by Me, as Time, they will surely die. Who are they? All these warriors in every division, in the entire army under Bhishma, Drona and others.*

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व

जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।

मयैवेते निहताः पूर्वमेव

निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Therefore arise and attain fame, and conquering your enemies, enjoy a flourishing kingdom. By Me alone have these been killed already. O Savyasāchin (Arjuna), you be merely an instrument.

As it is so, *Therefore* etc. *Therefore* you arise for battle and attain fame that Bhishma, Drona and others, invincible even by the gods, were defeated by Arjuna. Easily conquering your enemies, enjoy a flourishing kingdom. These your enemies have almost been killed by Me, the all-destroying Time, even before your battle has commenced. Still you be merely an instrument, O Savyasāchin—etymologically, one who is accustomed to discharge an arrow with one's left hand. Arjuna is called Savyasāchin, since he could shoot arrows even with his left hand.

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च

कर्णं तथाऽन्यानपि योधवीरान् ।

मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा

युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Kill Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna as also other great warriors, already killed by Me; be not distressed. Fight, you will conquer your enemies in battle.

Even the doubt expressed in, "And we do not know which would be the better course for us" etc. (II. 6), should not be entertained. This is being stated: *Kill Drona*, etc. *Kill Drona* and others, whom you are afraid of—who are *already killed by Me; be not distressed*, be not afraid, *you will certainly conquer your adversaries, enemies, in battle.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य

कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी ।

नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं

सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५ ॥

Sanjaya said:

35. Hearing these words of Keshava (Sri Krishna), the trembling Arjuna, saluted with folded palms and said again to Sri Krishna in faltering accents, bowing down and in great fear.

What happened after that, Sanjaya related to Dhritarāshtra: *Hearing these words of Sri Krishna,*

spoken in the last three verses, *the trembling diademed one, Arjuna, saluted with folded palms and said again to Sri Krishna. How did he say? In faltering accents, with his voice choked under the impulse of fear, joy, etc., bowing down and in great fear, being too much frightened.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या

जगत् प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।

रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति

सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६ ॥

Arjuna said:

36. It is mete, O Hrishikesa (Krishna), that by Your glorification the world gets delighted and attracted (towards You), the demons, getting frightened, run in all directions, and all the hosts of perfected beings bow down to You.

The eleven verses beginning with. *It is mete* etc. give Arjuna's words. *Sthāne* is an indeclinable, meaning, 'It is proper.' O *Hrishikesa* (Krishna), since You are thus of wonderful prowess and kind to Your devotees, therefore by Your glorification, by singing Your greatness, it is not

I alone that get delighted, but the whole world gets delighted, derives great pleasure—this indeed is *mete*, is but proper. So also that the world gets attracted, is drawn (*towards You*), that the demons, getting frightened, run, flee, in all directions, and that all the hosts of beings perfected by Yoga, austerities, Mantra, etc., bow down to You, offer salutations to You,—all this is proper indeed, i.e., there is nothing surprising in it.

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन् महात्मन्  
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास

त्वमक्षरं सदसत् तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

37. And why should they not, O noble soul, salute You the original Agent, who are greater than even *Brahmā*? O infinite being, O ruler of the gods, O abode of the world, You are the imperishable, the manifest and the unmanifest, and that which is beyond both.

The reason for that (which is stated in the last verse) is being given: *And why* etc. O noble soul, O ruler of the gods, O abode of the world, why, for what reason, should they not salute You, make obeisance to You?—of what nature?—You who are



*the original Agent and greater than even Brahmā, the progenitor even of Brahmā. Further, You are also the Sat or manifest and the Asat or unmanifest and that which is beyond these both, the primeval Cause, the imperishable Brahman. In other words, there is nothing surprising in the fact that on account of these nine reasons all should salute You.*

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-

स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

वेत्ताऽसि वेद्यं च परं च धाम

त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८ ॥

38. You are the primeval God, the ancient Being, You are the supreme repository of this universe, You are the knower and the knowable, and the highest abode; O You of infinite form, by You is the universe pervaded.

Further: *You are etc. You are the primeval God, the first among the gods. Since you are the ancient, beginningless, Being, therefore You are the supreme repository, place of dissolution, of this universe. Likewise, You are the knower of the universe, and You are everything that is knowable, as also the highest abode, the status of Vishnu.*

Therefore, *O You of infinite form, by You is this universe pervaded.* Owing to these seven reasons You alone are worthy of salutation—this is the idea

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः

प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।

नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः

पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

39. You are the Wind-god, Death, Fire, the Sea-god, the moon, Prajāpati (Brahmā) and also the great-grandsire; salutations, a thousandfold salutation to You; salutations again and again to You, salutations.

For another reason You are worthy of salutation from all, viz., that You are the Self of all the gods—praising the Lord thus, Arjuna also offers his own salutations: *You are etc. You are the Wind-god etc.*, is stated to imply, 'You are the sum of all the gods', *Prajāpathi*, the grandsire (Brahmā). You being even his progenitor, You are *the great grandsire*; therefore *a thousandfold salutation to You. Again a thousandfold salutation to You.* Through excessive devotion, reverence and fear, not feeling satisfied with offering salutation, Arjuna offers salutations many, many times.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते

नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।

अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं

सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४० ॥

40. O All, salutations to You in front and from behind, salutations to You all round; You are of infinite prowess, of immeasurable valour; You pervade everything, and so You are everything.

Further: *O All*, etc. *O All*, embodiment of all, *salutations to You* in all directions. By way of establishing the Lord's being the embodiment of all, Arjuna states: He whose *prowess*, strength, is *infinite* and likewise whose *valour*, courage, is *immeasurable*—*You* who are like this *pervade*, exist pervading, *everything*, the entire universe, both inside and outside, even as gold pervades its effects, bracelets, ear-rings, etc.; therefore *You are* the embodiment of all.

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं

हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।

अजानता महिमानं तवेदं

मया प्रमादात् प्रणयेन वाऽपि ॥ ४१ ॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि

विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।

एकोऽथवाऽप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं

तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२ ॥

41-42. Whatever I, not knowing the greatness and this form of Yours, may have said to You importunately, out of ignorance or affection, addressing You as, O Krishna, O Yādava, O friend, regarding You as my friend, and in whatever way you may have been slighted out of fun at sport, in bed, on the seat, or in eating, either alone or in company—all that, O Achyuta, I entreat You, the incomprehensible one, to forgive.

Now Arjuna is imploring the Lord for forgiveness in the two verses beginning with: *Whatever* etc. *Regarding You as* an ordinary friend of mine, *whatever I may have said to You importunately*, rashly, insultingly, *I entreat You to forgive*, in the next verse—this is the construction. What is it?—*Addressing You as, O Krishna, O Yādava, O friend*. The conjunction (Sandhi) in सखेति is a seer's (Ārsha) license<sup>1</sup>. The reason for addressing importunately

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<sup>1</sup> सखे इति in conjunction ought to be सख इति without a second combination.

is being stated: *Whatever I, not knowing the greatness and this universal form of Yours may have said out of ignorance or affection. Further, O Achyuta, in whatever way You may have been slighted out of fun at play etc., alone, i.e., staying in solitude without friends, or in company, in the presence of joking friends, too, all that series of offences I entreat You, the incomprehensible one, i.e., whose glory is inconceivable, to forgive.*

पिताऽसि लोकस्य चराचरस्य

त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो

लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३ ॥

43. You are the father of this world of moving and unmoving things, adorable and the teacher, greater than any superior, there is none indeed equal to You in all the three worlds, how then could there be one greater than You, O You of unrivalled power?

His inconceivable glory is being stated: *You are etc. Unrivalled, which has no comparison; You whose power is of this kind, O You of unrivalled power, You are the father, progenitor, of this universe*

*of moving and unmoving things, therefore adorable and the teacher, greater than any superior. Therefore there is none else indeed even equal to You in all the three worlds, there being none else than the Lord. How then could there be one greater than You?*

तस्मात् प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं

प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीडयम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः

प्रियः प्रियायाऽर्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Therefore prostrating the body and bowing down to You, I entreat You, the adorable Lord, to be gracious; just as a father forgives his son, a friend his friend, and a lover his (beloved one) to please her, even so You should forgive me, O Lord.

As it is so, *Therefore* etc. *Therefore* I entreat You, the adorable Lord, the praiseworthy Master of the world. How? *Prostrating the body*, making it fall flat like a stick, thus completely *bowing down to You*. Therefore You should forgive me, excuse my offence. As who forgiving whom? Just as a father out of kindness puts up with the offence of his son, as a disinterested friend (forgives) the offence of his

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं

रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।

तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं

यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ ४७ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

47. Being pleased, I have shown you, O Arjuna, through My Yoga power, this supreme form of Mine, resplendent, universal, infinite and primeval, which has not been seen before by any one else than you.

Being thus entreated, *the Lord* cheering up Arjuna *said* in the three verses beginning with: *Being pleased*, etc. *O Arjuna*, why are you afraid when *being pleased*, out of grace, *I have shown you this supreme*, excellent, *form of Mine through My Yoga power*, by virtue of My miraculous power (Yogamāyā). Its very excellence is being stated: (Which is) *resplendent, universal, infinite and primeval and which has not been seen before by any one else than you*, by any one else except a devotee like you.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनेन दाने-

न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरग्रे ।



एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके

द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

48. Neither by a study of the Vedas and sacrifices, nor by charity, nor by ceremonies, nor by austere penances, can I be seen in this form, in the world of mortals, by any other person than you, O great hero among the Kurus.

Having seen this vision, which is very rare, you are blessed. This is being stated: As there is nothing like a study of the sacrifices besides a study of the Vedas, the word 'sacrifices' here stands for books on sacrifices like the Kalpa Sutras. Therefore the text means, *by a study of the Vedas and books on sacrifices. Nor by charity, nor by ceremonies like the Agnihotra<sup>1</sup>, nor by austere penances like the Chāndrāyana<sup>2</sup>, can I be seen in this form, in the world of mortals, by any other person than you.* It is you alone who have seen it through My grace, and have become blessed.

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<sup>1</sup> Daily offering of milk in the sacred fire.

<sup>2</sup> Increasing and decreasing the food in the bright and dark half of the month respectively, ranging between fasting and fifteen mouthfuls.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो  
 दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम् ।  
 व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं  
 तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

49. Be not agitated, or deluded, seeing this terrible form of Mine; free from fear, and with cheerful mind, see again that very form of Mine.

Even after this, if you should be agitated seeing this terrible form, then I shall show that very form. This is being stated: *Be not etc. Seeing this terrible form of Mine, be not agitated or deluded. Being free from fear and with cheerful mind, see well again that very form of Mine.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा  
 स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।  
 आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं  
 भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

Sanjaya said:

50. Speaking thus to Arjuna, Vāsudeva (Krishna) again showed His own

form; the great soul again cheered up the frightened (Arjuna), assuming His benign body.

Speaking thus, the Lord showed His former form. So *Sanjaya said: Speaking thus etc. Speaking thus to Arjuna, Vāsudeva showed again His own form, i.e., as He used to be before, with diadem etc., and with four hands. Thus assuming His benign body, He again cheered up the frightened Arjuna, Great soul (Mahātma), of universal form, or it may mean, kind-hearted.*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।

इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ ५१ ॥

Arjuna said:

51. O Janārdana, seeing this benign human form of Yours I have now become self-composed and come to normal state.

Then being free from fear *Arjuna said: O Janārdana, etc. I have now become self-composed, serene. And I have come to normal state, recovered myself. The rest is clear.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाक्षिणः ॥ ५२ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

52. Exceedingly difficult is it to see this form of Mine that you have seen; even the gods are ever eager to see this form.

Showing the rarity of the grace that He had bestowed on Arjuna, *the Blessed Lord said: Exceedingly* etc. *This universal form of Mine that you have seen is exceedingly difficult, impossible, to see; for even the gods are only ever eager to see this form, but they do not see it.*

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ ५३ ॥

53. Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifices, am I visible in this form, as you have seen Me.

The reason for it is: *Neither* etc. The meaning is clear.

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥ ५४ ॥

54. But by undivided devotion, O Arjuna, can I in this form be known

and realized in truth and entered into, O scorcher of foes.

By what means, then, are You visible (like this)? That is being stated: *But by* etc. *But by undivided*, by one pointed, *devotion to Me can I* of this universal form be known in truth, in reality, through the Scriptures, and realized by direct cognition and entered into attaining identity with Me, and not by any other means.

मत्कर्मकुन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५ ॥

55. He who works for Me, has Me for the supreme goal, is devoted to Me, and non-attached, and bears no hatred towards any creature, he attains to Me, O Pāṇḍava.

Now hear the supreme secret, the essence of all Scriptures. That is stated: *He who works* etc. *He who works for Me*, he who has Me for the supreme goal, he who is devoted to Me and non-attached to sons etc., and who bears no hatred towards any creature—such a person as this attains to Me and not any one else.

Thus the Lord showed to His devotee the universal form which is very difficult even for the gods to see or with millions of penances and sacrifices.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WAY OF DEVOTION

अर्जुन उवाच ।

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।  
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said:

1. Between those devotees who worship You being thus ever devoted, and those who worship the Imperishable, the Unmanifest, who are better versed in Yoga?

The twelfth chapter sets about to determine which of the two, viz., the worship of the Impersonal or that of the Personal, is superior.

At the end of the last chapter in, "He who works for Me, has Me for the supreme goal" etc., the superiority of one who is steadfast in devotion has been declared. Here and there, in verses like, "O son of Kunti, proclaim (to the world)" etc. (IX. 31) his (the devotee's) superiority alone has been described. Similarly the superiority of one who is devoted to knowledge has also been declared in, "Of these, the man of knowledge, who is constantly in communion and single-minded in devotion excels" etc.

(VII-17) and in, "You will cross all sin by the boat of knowledge alone" etc. (IV. 36). Thus though both are good, (yet) in order to know which one is superior, *Arjuna* questioned the Lord thus: *Between etc. Between those devotees who being thus, by offering You all actions, ever devoted, attached to You, worship, meditate on, You of the universal form, the omniscient and omnipotent one, and those who worship the Imperishable Brahman, the Unmanifest, the Impersonal, who are better versed in Yoga, i.e., who excel?*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Those who worship Me fixing their mind on Me, ever devoted, and endowed with supreme faith—they I regard as the best Yogins.

*The Blessed Lord said in reply that of the two the first-mentioned ones excel: Those who etc. Those who worship Me fixing, concentrating, their mind on Me, the supreme Lord endowed with omniscience etc., ever devoted, attached to Me by*



performing work etc.; for My sake, and endowed with supreme faith—them I regard as the best Yogins.

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।

सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥

सनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

3-4 But they who worship the Imperishable, Indescribable, Unmanifest, All-pervading, Inconceivable, Changeless, Immovable and Eternal, controlling well their senses, even-minded everywhere and devoted to the good of all beings, (also) attain Me alone.

Are not the others then superior? This is being answered in the two verses beginning with: *But they* etc. *But they who worship*, meditate on, the Imperishable, also attain Me alone—this is the construction of the two verses. The characteristics of the Imperishable are, Indescribable etc. *Indescribable*, which cannot be expressed in words, because it is *Unmanifest*, has no form etc.; *All-pervading*, omnipresent; just because It is *Unmanifest*, It is *Inconceivable*; *Changeless*, existing as the substratum of the phenomenal universe; *Immovable* free from

increase etc., and therefore *Eternal*, everlasting. The rest is clear.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

5. The trouble of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest is greater: for the way of the Unmanifest is attained with difficulty by the embodied soul.

If they also attain You alone, then where is the excellence of the former? In reply, the distinction between them, due to one being easy and the other difficult, is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *The trouble etc. The trouble of those whose minds are attached to the Unmanifest, the Impersonal, Immutable One, is greater, for the way of the Unmanifest, devotion to the Unmanifest, is attained with difficulty by the embodied soul.* Because, to those who are identified with the body, devotion to the inner Self is always difficult.

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।

भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

6-7. Those, however, who renouncing all actions in Me, and being attached to Me, worship Me with unswerving devotion through meditation—these people, who have fixed their mind on Me, I quickly redeem from this ocean of transmigratory existence beset with death.

But My devotees attain realization easily through My grace. This is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Those, etc. Renouncing all actions in Me, offering them to Me, the supreme Lord, being attached to Me, worship Me with unswerving devotion, devotion which has no other object of worship than Myself, i.e., worship Me with whole-hearted devotion, through meditation—these people, who have thus fixed their mind on Me, I quickly redeem from this ocean of transmigratory existence beset with death.*

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धि निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Fix your mind on Me alone, let your intellect rest in Me, you will live in Me alone hereafter; there is no doubt (about it).

Since it is so, therefore, *Fix your mind* etc. *Fix, steady, your cogitating mind on Me alone*, and also *let your intellect*, which is determinative, *penetrate Me alone*. Thus acting, you will attain knowledge through My grace, *and you will hereafter*, after death, *live in Me alone*, i.e., exist as one with Me, *there is no doubt about it*. As the Sruti says, "At death, the Lord instructs about the redeeming supreme Brahman."

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥ ९ ॥

9. If, however, you are not able to fix the mind steadily on Me, then through the Yoga of practice seek to attain Me, O Dhananjaya.

To one who is unable to worship like that an easier means is being taught: *If, etc. If you are not able to fix the mind on Me* in such a way that it becomes steady, then bring the distracted mind back again and again and *seek to attain Me*, strive to attain Me, *through the Yoga of practice* which consists in remembering Me.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

10. If you are unable even to practise, then be solely devoted to rites for Me; even by doing rites for My sake, you will attain perfection.

*If further you are etc. If you are unable even to practise constantly, then be solely devoted to rites which are meant to please Me, like fasting on the eleventh day of the moon, observing other vows and singing My name. Even by doing such rites for My sake, You will attain Liberation.*

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

11. If, however, you are unable to do even this, then taking refuge in Me and being self-controlled, renounce the fruit of all actions.

To one who is altogether unable to practise rites steadfastly for the Lord, an alternative means is suggested. *If, however, etc. If, however, you are unable to do even this, then taking refuge in Me, surrendering yourself to Me alone, and being self-controlled, renounce the fruit of all actions which have visible results and obligatory rites like the Agnihotra. This is what is meant: "All I can do is to work under the Lord's command according to*

my ability, but the results, whether visible or invisible, are in the hands of the Lord"—if you live thus, leaving all responsibility to Me, and renouncing the hankering for results, then you will through My grace attain blessedness.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्वचानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. Knowledge is superior to (mere) practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, superior to meditation is renunciation of the fruit of action, from renunciation results peace immediately.

This renunciation of the fruit of action is being praised: *Knowledge* etc. *Knowledge* based on teaching coupled with reasoning is superior to mere practice without proper comprehension. *Meditation* based on knowledge is superior even to that, for Sruti texts say, "Then through meditation one realizes that absolute" (Mu. 3. 1. 8). Superior to this even is renunciation of the fruit of action already described. From such renunciation of the fruit of action, through the consequent non-attachment to work and its fruit, and through My grace, results immediately Liberation from the worldly existence.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा हृदनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

13-14. Non-envious, friendly, and compassionate towards all beings, free from ideas of possession and ego-consciousness, sympathetic in pain and pleasure, forgiving, always contented, contemplative; self-controlled, of firm conviction with his mind and intellect dedicated to Me—such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

The characteristics of such a devotee which lead quickly to divine grace are being stated in the eight verses beginning with: *Non-envious*, etc. *Non-envious*, friendly, and *compassionate towards all beings* as the case may be, that is to say, bearing no malice towards people who are superior, friendly towards equals, and compassionate towards inferiors, *free from ideas of possession and ego-consciousness*, sympathetic in, who feels equally, the *pain and pleasure* of others just because of compassionateness, *forgiving, always*, whether in gain or in its absence, *contented*, cheerful, *contemplative* (Yogi), vigilant, *self-controlled*, of restrained nature, whose *conviction*



with respect to Me is *firm*, and who has *dedicated his mind and intellect to Me*—such a devotee of Mine is *dear to Me*.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

15. From whom the world gets no trouble, and who gets no trouble from the world, who is free from elation, jealousy, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me.

Further: *From whom etc. From whom the world, people, gets no trouble, agitation through apprehension of danger, and who gets no trouble from the world, and who is free from natural elation etc.*—of these, *elation* is joy at attaining what one desires, *jealousy* is envy at another's gain, *fear* is terror, and *anxiety* is ruffling of the mind due to fear etc.—that devotee of Mine who is free from these, is *dear to Me*.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्विभक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Independent, clean, dexterous, indifferent, untroubled, and discarding all endeavours—such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Further: *Independent* etc. *independent*, *in-*  
different even to objects that have come of them-  
selves; *clean*, having external and internal purity;  
*dexterous*, not lazy; *indifferent*, not taking sides;  
*untroubled*, free from anguish; *and discarding*,  
habitually giving up *all endeavours*, undertakings  
bearing visible or invisible results—*such a devotee of*  
*Mine is dear to Me.*

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न कांक्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

17. He who neither rejoices nor dislikes  
nor grieves nor desires, who renounces  
good and evil, and who is devoted, is dear  
to Me.

Further: *He who* etc. *He who* neither rejoices  
on getting what is pleasing *nor dislikes* on getting  
what is unpleasant, who neither grieves on the loss  
of a desired object, *nor desires* an object not (yet)  
attained, *who* habitually renounces good and evil, merit  
and demerit, *who*, being like this, *is devoted* to Me, *is*  
*dear to Me.*

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

18-19. Alike to foe and friend, in honour and dishonour, in heat and cold, happiness and misery, free from attachment, alike in praise and censure, reticent, satisfied with anything, without a home, steady in mind—such a devoted person is dear to Me.

Further: *Alike to foe etc. Alike, same, to foe and friend; alike even in honour and dishonour, that is, free from joy and sorrow respectively; alike in heat and cold, happiness and misery; free from attachment, not attached to anything; to whom praise and censure are alike; reticent, of controlled speech; satisfied with anything, with whatever is obtained; without a home, having no fixed shelter; steady or sober in mind—such a devoted person is dear to Me.*

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

20. Those devotees who practise this nectar-like religion just taught with faith, and with Me as their supreme goal, are extremely dear to Me.

The religion taught above together with its fruit is being concluded: *Those etc. Those devotees*

*who practise, follow, this religion just taught—nectar-like, because it leads to immortality—with faith, and with Me as their supreme goal, are extremely dear to Me.*

The way of the Unmanifest is difficult and is attained with many obstacles; therefore the wise man should take to the easier and noble path of devotion to the lotus feet of Sri Krishna.

**CHAPTER XIII**  
**DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN**  
**NATURE AND SOUL**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord Said:

1. This body, O son of Kunti, is called the Kshetra, and that which is conscious of it is called Kshetrajna (embodied self) by those who have knowledge thereof.

It has been stated by the Lord, "I redeem My devotees from this transmigratory existence" (XII. 7). Now in this thirteenth chapter the knowledge of the Truth is being declared for the fulfilment of that.

It has been promised by the Lord earlier "Those people I quickly redeem from this ocean of transmigratory existence beset with death" (XII. 7). As this redemption out of transmigratory existence is not possible without the knowledge of the Self, in

order to inculcate this knowledge of the Truth, this chapter dealing with the discrimination between matter (Prakriti) and spirit (Purusha) is begun. Now it is the want of discrimination between the two Prakritis, the lower and the higher, mentioned in the seventh chapter that leads to this transmigratory existence of a fraction of Pure Consciousness that has assumed the state of an embodied being. And it is these two Prakritis with which the Lord embarks on creation etc., for the enjoyment of the embodied being. In order to determine the true nature of these very two Prakritis called the Kshetra and Kshetrajna, quite distinct from each other, *the Blessed Lord said: This body etc. This body which is the basis of all enjoyment is called the Kshetra (lit. the field), since it is the sprouting ground of transmigratory existence; and that which is conscious of this (Kshetra), which thinks in terms of 'I' and 'mine' in respect of it, is called Kshetrajna (the embodied self) by those who have knowledge thereof, who have discriminative knowledge of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna, since he is the enjoyer of the fruit<sup>1</sup>, like the farmer (who reaps the harvest).*

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ २ ॥

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<sup>1</sup> The result of his actions done in this body.

2. And know the Kshetrajna (embodied self) in all the bodies (Kshetras) to be Myself, O descendant of Bharata. The knowledge of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna (i.e., matter and spirit) is, in My opinion, true knowledge.

Thus the transmigratory nature of the embodied self has been stated. Now the transcendental non-transmigratory nature of that very self is being stated: And know etc. *And know the Kshetrajna, the embodied self, to be in reality Me alone, who am pervading all bodies, for My nature is referred to by the fraction of Pure Consciousness which is implied by the Sruti text, "Thou art That." (Chh. 6.8.7)<sup>1</sup>. That knowledge of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna is being praised to show its desirability: The knowledge which differentiates the Kshetra (body of matter) from the Kshetrajna (embodied self or spirit) is, in My opinion, true knowledge, for it leads to Liberation. Knowledge other than that is useless learning, since it leads to bondage. So it is said: "That is real work which does not lead to bondage, and that is true learning which leads to Liberation. Work other than that causes only fatigue, and knowledge other than that gives one mere technical skill."*

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<sup>1</sup> See Commentary on IV, 10, and foot-note on pages 125 and 126.



तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ३ ॥

3. What that Kshetra is, what it is like, what its modifications are, whence it arises, and what its forms are; and also what the other entity (the Kshetrajna) is, and what its powers are—hear that from Me in brief.

Here, though Nature (Prakriti), which is divided into twenty-four categories, is meant by the word 'Kshetra', yet, since the non-discrimination of it as 'I' (ego-consciousness) is manifest only in matter evolved as this body, therefore in order to differentiate it, the body is called the Kshetra. To explain it further He proposes: *What* etc. *What that Kshetra* referred to by Me is in itself, i.e., inert, of the nature of an object, and so on; *what it is like*, i.e., possessed of attributes like desire: *what its modifications are*, i.e., with what modifications like the senses, it is endowed with; *whence it arises*, how it arises from the conjunction of Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (spirit), and *what its forms are*, i.e., how it is differentiated into varieties like sentient and insentient; and also *what the other entity, the Kshetrajna, is in reality, and what its powers are*, i.e., by virtue of its inconceivable majesty,

what powers it is endowed with—hear all that from Me in brief.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिविविधैः पृथक् ।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ४ ॥

4. It has been sung differently by the sages (Rishis) and variously in different Vedic hymns, as also in passages indicative and descriptive of Brahman, furnished with reasons and decisive.

Of whose elaborate teachings is this a brief summary? That is being stated: *It has been* etc. *It has been sung*, taught, by sages like Vasishtha in the Yoga Scripture, *differently*, in various ways as objects of meditation and concentration in the form of the Viraj (cosmic intellect) etc; and which has been sung variously, in the form of various gods to whom sacrifices are to be offered, in different Vedic hymns prescribing daily and occasional rites and those for the attainment of specific desires; as also in passages indicative of Brahman. Upanishadic texts like, "That from which all these beings are born" etc. (Taitt. 3.1), which describe Brahman indirectly, and passages descriptive of Brahman which help one to attain Brahman directly, i.e., Upanishadic passages like, "Existence, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman" (Taitt. 2.1), which define Brahman

in Its true essence. Further, (they are) *furnished with reasons* like, "This universe, my child, was Existence alone in the beginning" (Chh. 6.2.1); "How can Existence come out of non-existence?" (Chh. 6.2.2); "Who would have breathed in and who would have lived had not Bliss existed in this ether (of the heart)? This verily it is that bestows bliss" (Taitt. 2.7). The words, 'Anyāt' and 'Prānyāt' of (the last quotation from) the Sruti<sup>1</sup> mean: "Who would have performed the function of the apana and the vital force?" *Decisive*, establishing an indisputable meaning through an identity of the introductory and concluding statements. What has thus been taught elaborately by those texts, and is difficult to summarise, I shall tell you in brief; listen to it—this is the purport.

Or we may take 'Brahma-sutra' to mean the aphorisms beginning with: "Now therefore an inquiry into Brahman" (B.S. 1.1.1), which are also descriptive of Brahman ('Brahma-pada'), inasmuch as they ascertain the nature of Brahman. By such aphorisms *furnished with reasons*, as, for example, "On account of thinking, (Pradhāna) is not (the First Cause); it is not based on the Scriptures" (B.S. 1.1.5); and "(In the passage) 'The Self consisting of bliss', (Brahman is put forward as an

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<sup>1</sup> Translated above as 'breathed in' and 'lived', respectively.

independent entity) on account of the repetition of Brahman (as the main topic in that chapter)" (B.S. 1.1.12.)—which decide the thing to be known (Brahman). The rest as in the first interpretation.

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ६ ॥

5-6. The (five) great elements, egoism (Ahankara), the intellect, and the unmanifest, the ten sense-organs and the one (mind) and the five objects of the senses; desire, aversion, happiness, misery, the body, intelligence and patience—thus the Kshetra has been described in brief together with its modifications.

The nature of the Kshetra is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *The (five) etc. The five great elements, earth etc.; egoism (Ahankara), the cause of these (five great elements); the intellect, the great principle (Mahat), which is determinative; the unmanifest, the primordial Nature; the ten external*

*sense-organs*, viz., the ears, the skin, the nose, the eyes, the tongue, the organ of speech, the hands, the feet and the organs of excretion and generation *and the one*, mind; *the five objects of the senses*, viz., sound etc., which are primarily of the nature of Tanmātras (subtle elements) and are manifest as the special qualities of Ākāśa (ether) etc. and thus become the five objects of the senses. Thus the twenty-four categories have been enumerated (5).

*Desire* etc. are well known; the aggregate, *the body* (which is an aggregate of the elements); *intelligence*, the cognitive function of the mind; *patience*, fortitude. These—desire and the rest—being objects of cognition, are not attributes of the Self (Ātman) but of the mind alone, and hence they come under Kshetra. These (the qualities mentioned here) include (other qualities of the mind) reflection etc., by implication. The Scripture also says: “Desire, reflection, doubt, faith, want of faith, patience, impatience, modesty, intelligence and fear—all these are but the mind” (Brih. 1.5.3). By this the qualities of the Kshetra introduced in, “What it is like” (verse 3), are enumerated. *Thus the Kshetra together with its modifications* such as the senses *has been described in brief* to you by Me. This concludes the topic of the Kshetra (6).

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।  
 आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥  
 इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।  
 जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ८ ॥  
 असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।  
 नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ ९ ॥  
 मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।  
 विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १० ॥  
 अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।  
 एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ ११ ॥

7-11. Humility, unostentatiousness, harmlessness, forbearance, uprightness, service to the Guru, purity, steadiness, self-control, dispassion for sense-objects and absence of egoism, seeing misery and evil in birth, death, old age and sickness, non-attachment and non-identification with son, wife, home, etc., always being even-minded whether good or evil befalls, unswerving devotion to Me through the Yoga of non-separation, resorting to solitude, and aver-

sion for company, always being devoted to spiritual knowledge, perception of the aim of the knowledge of Truth—all this is called knowledge. What is different from this is ignorance.

Now, in order to describe at length the pure Kshetrajna, which is the object to be realized, as distinct from the Kshetra described above, the means to its realization are being enumerated in the five verses beginning with: *Humility*, etc. *Humility*, not boasting of one's virtues; *unostentatiousness*, absence of vaunting; *harmlessness*, avoidance of causing pain to others; *forbearance*, patience; *uprightness*, straightforwardness; *service to the Guru*, serving the worthy preceptor; *purity* both external and internal—external purity with clay, water, etc., and internal purity by removing attachment etc. The Smriti also says: "Purity is described as twofold, external and internal. External purity is said to be attained through clay and water, while internal purity is purification of the mind." *Steadiness*, steadfastness in the path of righteousness by one who has taken to it; *self-control*, control over the body (7).

Further: *Dispassion* etc. *Seeing*, repeatedly pondering, *misery and evil in birth* etc.; or the phrase may mean, seeing the evil of misery in birth etc. The rest of verse 8 is clear.



Further: *Non-attachment* etc. *Non-attachment* not delighting in sons and other objects; *non-identification*, not feeling happy or miserable at the happiness or misery of one's son etc. arising through excessive identification; *always* being *even-minded whether evil or good befalls* or comes to him (9).

Further: *Unswerving* etc. *Unswerving*, unflinching, *devotion to Me*, the supreme Lord, *through the Yoga of non-separation*, i.e., by seeing the Self in everything; *solitude*, a place which is clean and soothing to the mind—habitually dwelling in such places is (*resorting to solitude*); *aversion for company*, absence of fondness for gathering of worldly-minded people (10).

Further: *Always* etc. *Spiritual knowledge*, knowledge that has for its object the Self—*always being devoted to* or dwelling on it, i.e., being constantly engaged in realizing the precise significance of (the terms) "That" and "Thou" (in the Vedic dictum "Thou art That"; *the aim, purpose, of the knowledge of Truth*, i.e., Liberation—*perception* of that, i.e., realizing Liberation to be the highest goal of life; *all this*, the twenty virtues, viz., humility, unostentatiousness, etc., that have been enumerated, *is called knowledge*, for they are means to it; *what is different from this*, contrary to this, viz., pride, etc., is said to be *ignorance* by Vasishtha and others, for they are antagonistic to knowledge.

Therefore they are always to be renounced. This is the idea (11).

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १२ ॥

12. I shall tell you that which has to be known, knowing which one attains immortality; it is the beginningless, supreme Brahman, which is said to be neither being nor non-being.

That which has to be known by these means (described in the previous verses) is being declared in the six verses beginning with: *I shall tell* etc. *I shall tell you that which has to be known*. The fruit of this knowledge is being declared in order to make the hearer attentive. *Knowing which*, presently to be told, *one attains immortality*, Liberation. What is that? *Beginningless*, which has no beginning, *supreme*, unsurpassed, *Brahman*. Though the same meaning would have been conveyed if the word 'Anādi' alone had been used as a Bahuvrihi compound, yet the addition of the suffix (denoting possession) in 'Anādimat' is a metrical license. Or the two words may be split as, *Anādi matparam* (instead of *Anādimat param*), in which case it would mean 'My, i.e., Ishvara's, supreme, attributeless form', Brahman. That is being further expounded:

*Which is said to be neither being nor non-being.* That which is the object of a positive statement is said to be 'being', and that which is the object of a negation is expressed as 'non-being'. But Brahman is different from both these, for It is not an object of knowledge.

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३ ॥

13. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and faces everywhere, with ears everywhere, It rests pervading everything in this world.

But if Brahman is neither being nor non-being, then Sruti texts like, "All this is indeed Brahman" (Chh. 3. 14. 1); "All this is nothing but Brahman" (Nri. Ut. 7. 3), will be contradicted. Apprehending such a doubt, the text, showing Brahman's all-pervasiveness (or being the Self of all) through Its incomprehensible power as described in Sruti texts like, "The supreme power of this Being is said to be manifold, and His knowledge, strength and action are described as inherent in Him" (Svet. 6.8.), says in the five verses beginning with: *With hands etc.* He who has his *hands and feet everywhere*, who has his *eyes, heads and faces everywhere*, with organs of hearing everywhere, i.e. *having ears everywhere*,

—*It rests pervading everything in this world, i.e., It remains as the basis of all activity, through its adjuncts such as the hands belongnig to all creatures.*

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १४ ॥

14. It is manifest in the functions of the various sense-organs, yet bereft of all sense-organs, unattached, yet sustaining everything, without attributes, yet the protector of the qualities.

Further: *It is manifest* etc. *It is manifest in the functions* in the form of colour etc., *of the various sense-organs*, viz., the eyes, etc., as those particular objects; or it may mean: It manifests all the sense-organs together with their functions, viz., their respective objects; and is *yet bereft of all sense-organs*. As the Scripture says, "Without hands and feet He moves fast and grasps. He sees without eyes and hears without ears" etc. (Svet. 3. 19). *Unattached*, devoid of all attachments, *yet sustaining* or supporting, i.e., the substratum of, *everything*; That (Knowable) is *without attributes*, without qualities like Sattva, *yet is the protector of the qualities*, viz., Sattva etc.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १५ ॥

15. It is without and within all beings, It is moving and unmoving, being subtle, It is incomprehensible, It is far, yet near.

Further: *It is without* etc. *It alone is without and within all beings*, moving or stationary, that are Its own products, even as gold is in bracelets and ear-rings, or water is within and without the waves. *It alone is all beings, moving and unmoving*, animate and inanimate, for the effect is but the cause in another form. Even so, *being subtle*, having no form etc. *It is incomprehensible*, is not capable of being definitely known as, "It is this". Therefore to the ignorant *It is far*, as though hundreds of thousands of miles away, being beyond Nature (Prakriti) that is subject to change. To the wise again, *It is near*, ever close by, being his very soul. As the Scripture says, "It moves and it moves not; It is far and again near. It is within all this, and again It is outside of all this" (Ish. 5). *Ejati* moves; *Naijati* moves not. *Tadvantike* should be disjoined as *Tat u and antike*.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १६ ॥

16. It is undivided in beings and yet remains as if divided; that Knowable is the sustainer of beings as also the destroyer and creator.

Further: *It is undivided* etc. *In beings*, animate and inanimate, *It is undivided*, not separate, as the cause, *and yet as effect It remains as if divided* or manifold. *That Knowable* mentioned above, *is the sustainer, nourisher, of beings* during the existence of the world. At the time of dissolution, *It is the destroyer*, i.e., It consumes everything, and at the time of creation, *It is the creator*, appearing as various effects.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. It is the Light of lights and is said to be beyond all darkness, It is knowledge, the knowable and accessible through knowledge, and is implanted in the heart of all beings.

Further: *It is the Light of lights*, illuminer of even the sun, the moon, etc. As the Srtui says, "Kindled by which Light the sun shines" (Taitt. Br. 3. 12. 9. 3), "There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. He shining, everything

shines after Him; by His light all this universe is lighted" (Kath. 5. 15) and so on. Therefore It is *said to be beyond all darkness*, untouched by ignorance. As the Sruti says, "(He shines) with the brilliance of the sun, beyond darkness" (Svet. 3.8), etc. *It is knowledge* which is manifest in the functions of the intellect. It is also *the knowable* in the form of colour etc., and also *accessible*, attainable, *through knowledge*, i.e., through the means to knowledge enumerated earlier, viz., "humility, unostentatiousness" etc. 'Accessible through Knowledge' is being elucidated: *Is implanted*, i.e., resides in Its unflinching essence as the Ruler *in the heart of all beings*.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।

मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १८ ॥

18. Thus the Kshetra, knowledge and the Knowable have been stated in brief. Knowing this, My devotee becomes fit to attain My being.

The topic under discussion, viz., the Kshetra etc., together with a description of one qualified for this (knowledge) and the fruit (of this knowledge) is being concluded: *Thus* etc. *Thus* what has been taught in detail by Vasishtha and others, viz., *the Kshetra* consisting of the items beginning with,



“The great elements” and ending with “patience” (verses 5-6) *knowledge* consisting of items beginning with “humility” and ending with “perception of the aim of the knowledge of Truth” (verses 7-11) and *the knowable*, described in the verses beginning with, “It is the beginningless, supreme Brahman”, and ending with “implanted in the heart of all beings” (12-17) *have all been stated in brief* by Me. *Knowing this, My devotee*, described in the last chapter, *becomes fit, worthy, to attain My being*, i.e., Brahmanhood.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वचनादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥ १९ ॥

19. Know both Prakriti and Purusha to be beginningless and know the evolutes and the Gunas as born of Prakriti (Nature).

Thus the Kshetra, what it is and what it is like, have been described up to this. Now, by stating Prakriti and Purusha to be the cause of transmigratory existence, what has already been introduced, viz., “What its modifications are, whence it arises, what its forms are, and also what the other entity (the Kshetrajna) is, and what its powers are,” is being declared in the five verses beginning with: *Know* etc. If Prakriti and Purusha should have a beginning, then we have to accept

another Prakriti as their cause, which will lead us to a *regressus in infinitum*. Therefore *know both to be beginningless*. Prakriti, being the power of the Lord (Ishvara) who is without a beginning, is beginningless. Purusha, too, being a part of the Lord, is of course beginningless.

As the great commentator Sankarāchārya has established by his elaborate composition the beginninglessness and eternity of the Lord (Ishvara) and His powers, we refrain from dilating on them. *Know the evolutes, viz., the body, senses, etc., and the Gunas, the modifications of the Gunas like happiness, misery and delusion, as born of Prakriti.*

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २० ॥

20. With respect to the production of the effect (body) and the causes (the senses), Prakriti is said to be the cause, while with respect to the experience of happiness and misery, the Purusha is said to be the cause.

Having shown that the evolutes are born of Prakriti, the Lord is now showing that the Purusha is the cause of transmigratory existence: *With*

*respect to etc. Effect, the body; the causes, the means to the experience of happiness and misery, viz., the senses—with respect to the production of these, i.e., their modification in those forms, Prakriti is said to be the cause by Kapila and others. Purusha, the embodied soul, is said to be the cause with respect to the experience of happiness and misery which are of its own making. This is the idea: Though the inert Prakriti cannot by itself be the cause, nor can the Purusha, who is changeless, be an experiencer, yet agency (here) means merely the accomplishment of an act. Such a thing is possible for an inert entity through the Adrishta (the resultant of past work) of a sentient principle, even as fire burns upwards, the wind blows obliquely, the milk in the udder streams forth owing to the Adrishta of the calf, and so on. Therefore Prakriti's agency is said to be due to the proximity of the Purusha. Experience is the cognition of happiness and misery. That being the quality of only a sentient being, the experience of the Purusha is said to be due to the proximity of the Prakriti.*

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ २१ ॥

21. For the Purusha residing in Prakriti experiences the Gunas born of Prakriti.

The cause of its birth from good and evil sources is its attachment to the Gunas (senses).

Even then how can the changeless and birthless Purusha be an experiencer? This is being answered: *For the Purusha* etc. *For the Purusha residing in Prakriti*, i.e., its effect, the body, as identified with it, *experiences* happiness etc., produced by the body. *The cause of its*, the Purusha's *birth from good sources* like those of the gods *and evil sources* like those of animals etc. *is its attachment to the Gunas*, the senses, which perform good and evil acts.

उपद्रष्टाऽनुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥ २२ ॥

22. The supreme Purusha in this body is called the Onlooker, the Permitter, the Nourisher, the Protector, the great Lord, and also the supreme Self.

Thus the transmigratory existence of the Purusha is due to want of discrimination with respect to Prakriti, and not by itself. To bring this out the essential nature of the Purusha is being set forth: *The supreme Purusha* etc. Though the *Purusha* resides in this body, which is a product of Prakriti, yet it is *supreme*, quite different from it,

that is to say, it is not associated with its qualities. The reasons are: Because it is *called the Onlooker*, being a distinct entity, it only watches as a bystander, i.e., a Witness; similarly *the Permitter*, it helps by the mere presence like one who approves. The Sruti also describes it as, "The witness, the pure consciousness, absolute and devoid of attributes" (Svet. 6.11). So also, as God it is called *the Nourisher*, sustainer, and *the Protector*, preserver, *the great Lord*, the ruler even of Brahmā and others, and is also called by the Sruti *the supreme Self*, the Inner Ruler. As the Sruti says, "It is the ruler of all beings, It is the lord of all beings, It is the protector of all beings" (Brih. 4. 4. 22).

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ २३ ॥

23. He who thus knows the Purusha and the Prakriti together with the Gunas is not born again, whatever his mode of life.

He who is able to discriminate thus between the Prakriti and the Purusha is being praised: *He who etc. He who thus knows the Purusha as an onlooker etc. and the Prakriti together with the Gunas, with the modifications like happiness and misery—such a person, whatever his mode of life, i.e., even though he may live disregarding all scriptural*

injunctions, *is not born again*, i.e., certainly gets liberated.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ २४ ॥

24. Some see the Self in the Self by the self through meditation, others by (the path of) knowledge, some others by Yoga and (still) others by the path of action.

With respect to this kind of discriminative knowledge of the Self, alternative paths are being declared in the two verses beginning with: *Some see* etc. *Some see the Self in the self* or body *by the self* or mind, *through meditation*, by a repetition of mental states in the form of the Self. *Others see* (the Self) *by knowledge*, by thinking of the difference between the Prakriti and the Purusha, *some others by Yoga* (as taught by Patanjali) which has eight steps, *and (still) others by the path of selfless action* (Karma-Yoga). The verb 'see' is understood in all cases. Though meditation etc. are fit to be practised in sequence, yet from the standpoint of differences in allegiance, they are spoken of as alternative paths (to the realization of the Self).

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वाऽन्येभ्य उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Others (again), not knowing thus, worship by hearing from others; verily, they also, being devoted to hearing, go beyond death.

The means to deliverance for very dull-witted aspirants is being taught: *Others* etc. *Others again, not knowing* how to realize the Self which is an onlooker and so on, by the path of knowledge, Yoga, etc., *worship, meditate, by hearing from others, viz., the preceptors, through instructions. They also, being devoted with faith to hearing the instructions, slowly go beyond death, this transmigratory existence.*

यावत् संजायते किञ्चित् सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात् तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २६ ॥

26. Whatever being is born, moving or unmoving (animate or inanimate), know that, O best of Bharatas, to come from the mixing of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna.

Inasmuch as the path of selfless action has been taught in chapters three to five, and Yoga and meditation in chapters six and eight, and as meditation is concerning the Self that is discriminated by



(the path of) knowledge, therefore knowledge alone is being declared from *Whatever* etc., up to the end of the chapter. *Whatever being or thing is born, know all that to come from the mixing, mutual superimposition of identity, of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna, due to want of discrimination between them.*

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २७ ॥

27. He who sees the supreme Lord abiding equally in all beings, the imperishable amidst the perishable—he sees indeed.

Having declared the transmigratory existence which arises due to want of discrimination, now is being taught the realization of the Self as discriminated from Prakriti for the cessation of this transmigratory existence: *He who* etc. *He who sees the supreme Lord abiding equally* as mere Existence, without attributes, *in all beings*, animate and inanimate, and therefore who realizes that even when these beings perish He does not perish—he *alone sees* rightly and none else.

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमेश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २८ ॥

28. For, seeing the Lord abiding equally everywhere, he does not injure the Self by the self; therefore he attains the supreme goal.

Why (is he said to see rightly)? This is being explained: *For, seeing* etc. *For, seeing*, because he sees, *the Lord equally abiding*, truly in His unflinching essence, *everywhere*, in all beings, *he does not injure the Self by the self*, does not deny through ignorance the Self, whose nature is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss and thus kill it; and *therefore he attains the supreme goal*, i.e., Liberation. But he who does not see like this, is indeed one who looks upon the body as the Self, and along with the body kills the Self. As the Sruti says, "Those, verily, are worlds of the Asuras, which are covered by blinding darkness, and to these worlds go, after death, those who destroy their Self" (Ish. 3).

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथाऽत्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ २९ ॥

29. He who sees that actions are in every way performed only by Prakriti, and likewise (sees) the Self as the non-doer. (alone) sees (in truth).

But then, as differences are seen (in the Self) as the doer of good and evil actions, how can the Self be alike? Anticipating such a doubt the text says: *He who* etc. *He who sees that actions are in everyway*, in all respects, *performed only by Prakriti*, transformed as the body and the sense-organs, *and likewise sees the Self as the non-doer*, sees that the agency attributed to the Self is only due to Its identification with the body and not in Itself—alone *sees* in truth and none else.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ ३० ॥

30. When one sees the diversity of beings as abiding in the one (Prakriti) and their emanation from that one alone, then one becomes Brahman.

Since all beings are nothing but Prakriti (Nature), they are not different from one another; therefore he who sees no difference in the Self because of the differentiation due to beings, attains Brahmanhood. This is being said: *When* etc. *When one sees*, perceives, *the diversity*, separateness, *of beings*, animate and inanimate, *as abiding in the one only*, the Prakriti, which is but the power of the Lord, *at the time of dissolution (Pralaya)*, *and who sees their emanation from that one Prakriti alone*, at

the time of creation, *then*, seeing the oneness of beings also on account of their being nothing but Prakriti, he turns out to be, *becomes*, the all-pervading *Brahman* indeed.

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात् परमात्माऽयमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

31. This supreme Self, being without a beginning and devoid of attributes, is immutable. Though residing in the body, O son of Kunti, It neither acts nor is It attached.

Even then differentiation in the Self is inevitable owing to actions and their results, viz., happiness, misery, etc., arising from Its connection with the body during Its transmigratory existence (i.e., as an embodied being); so how can there be sameness? That is being answered: *This supreme* etc. What is created, alone changes or is destroyed. And a thing that has attributes is destroyed when those attributes are gone. But *this supreme Self* is *without a beginning and devoid of attributes*, hence *immutable*, changeless; therefore *though residing in the body It neither acts*, does anything, *nor is It attached* to the fruit of actions.

यथा सर्वगतं सूक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Just as the all-pervading ether, being subtle, is not contaminated, so is the Self located in every body not contaminated.

An example is being given: *Just as* etc. *Just as the ether*, which exists everywhere, even in mire etc., *being subtle*, being untouched, *is not contaminated* by mire etc., *so is the Self*, though abiding in every body, superior, mediocre or inferior, *not contaminated*, not connected with the merits or defects of the body.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Even as the one sun illumines the whole world, even so, O descendant of Bharata, does the embodied soul illumine all bodies.

By the example of the ether it has been shown that the Self is not contaminated, being unattached. Now by the example of the sun it is being shown that the Self, since it illumines all bodies, is not contaminated by the properties of the objects illumined. The rest is clear.

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Those who thus perceive with the eye of knowledge the difference between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna, as also (the means of) freedom from the cause of beings (Nature)—attain the Supreme.

The import of the chapter is being concluded: *Those who etc. Those who thus*, in the manner stated, *perceive with the eye of discriminative knowledge the difference, distinction, between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna, as also those who know freedom, i.e., the means of freedom, viz., meditation, etc., from the said Nature,, the cause of all beings, attain the supreme State.*

I bow to the son of Nanda (Sri Krishna), the Lord, who is of the nature of supreme Bliss, and by whom the Prakriti and the Purusha, which are (generally) mixed up, have been accurately distinguished.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SEPARATION OF THE THREE GUNAS

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall tell you again the supreme knowledge—the best of all knowledges, knowing which all the sages have attained supreme felicity from hence.

Refuting the independence of Prakriti and Purusha, in the fourteenth chapter is described at length the manifold phenomenal existence of the soul arising out of the association with the Gunas.

It has been told in the last chapter, “Whatever being is born, animate and inanimate, know that, O best of Bharatas, to come from the mixing of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna” (XIII. 26). By declaring that this union of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna does not take place independently, as held by the Sāṅkhyas, who do not posit an Ishvara (Lord), but solely through the will of the supreme Lord, in order to delineate the manifoldness.



of the world on account of the Gunas, Sattva, etc., as stated in, "The cause of its birth from good and evil sources is its attachment to the Gunas" (XIII. 21), the Lord (first) praises<sup>1</sup> the subject-matter, to the above effect, that is going to be told in the two verses beginning with: *I shall tell you* etc. *Supreme*, devoted to the ultimate goal; *knowledge*, that by which a thing is known, i.e., teaching; *I shall tell you* that *again* in detail. What kind of knowledge? *The best of all knowledges* devoted to penance, rituals, etc., for this leads to Liberation. That is being told: *Knowing*, attaining, *which* (knowledge) *all the sages*, those devoted to contemplation, *have gone to*, *attained*, *supreme felicity*, Liberation, *from hence*, from the bondage of the body.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

2. By resorting to this knowledge they, having attained to My nature, are not reborn even at the time of creation nor are they distressed at the time of dissolution.

Further: *By resorting* etc. *By resorting to this knowledge*, by practising this means to knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> In order to make Arjuna attentive.

that is going to be stated, *they, having attained to My nature, attained identity with Me, are not reborn even at the time of creation, even when Brahmā and others are created; so also at the time of dissolution they are not distressed, they do not suffer the pangs of dissolution. That is to say, they do not undergo transmigration any more.*

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३ ॥

3. The great Nature is My womb; in that I place the germ, and from that, O descendant of Bharata, is the origin of all beings.

Thus making the listener attentive to what is going to be taught by praising it, the Lord declares the import of the teaching, viz., that the emergence of all beings from Prakriti and Purusha is subservient to the Lord and not independent of Him. *The great Nature* etc. *Great*, because it is not limited by time and space, (Brahmā)<sup>1</sup>, literally, the cause of the expansion (evolution) of its effects, i.e., *Nature* (Prakriti). That *great Nature is My womb*, which I, the supreme Lord, impregnate. *In that I place the*

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from a root meaning 'to expand'.

*germ, infuse the reflection of My intelligence, which is the cause of the evolution of the cosmos. At the time of creation I unite with a body suitable for enjoyment of the Kshetrajna, who during the period of dissolution was resolved in Me, endowed with the impressions of ignorance (nescience), desire and action. And from that impregnation is the origin, creation, of all beings, Brahmā and others.*

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४ ॥

4. Whatever forms, O son of Kunti, are born in different wombs, of them the great Nature is the womb, and I am the seed-giving father.

It is not merely at the starting of creation that all beings are produced from Prakriti and Purusha presided over by Me, but it is the case always. This is being stated: *Whatever forms, etc. Whatever forms, animate and inanimate, that are born in different wombs, human and so forth, of them the great Brahmā, Nature is the womb, is the matrix, and I am the seed-giving, generating, father.*

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these Gunas, O mighty-armed one, that are born of Nature (Prakriti), bind fast the immutable, embodied being in this body.

Having thus declared that the origin of all beings is from Prakriti and Purusha, which are subservient to God, the Lord, now elaborates the mundane existence of the Purusha due to its conjunction with Prakriti in the fourteen verses beginning with: *Sattva*, etc. *These three Gunas called Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are born of Nature (Prakriti)*, have their source in Prakriti. The state of equilibrium of these Gunas is Prakriti. Being manifest from that as different, (the Gunas) *bind fast*, that is, connect with their effects, viz., happiness, misery, delusion, etc., *in this body*, which is a product of Prakriti, *the embodied being*, that portion of Pure Consciousness which has identified itself with the body, but which in reality is *immutable, changeless*.

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६ ॥

6. Of these, Sattva on account of its stainlessness is luminous and free from evil; it binds (the embodied self) by attachment to happiness and by attachment to knowledge, O sinless one (Arjuna).

Of these the characteristics of Sattva and the manner in which it binds are being stated: *Of these, etc. Of these Gunas, Sattva on account of its stainlessness, transparency, is luminous, bright like a crystal, and free from evil, troubles, i.e., is serene. Hence, being serene, it binds by attachment to its product, happiness, and being luminous it binds by attachment to its product, knowledge, O sinless one.* That is to say, it connects the mental states like, 'I am happy', 'I am wise', with the Kshétrajna (soul), which identifies itself with these states.

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।

तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of desire and attachment; O son of Kunti, it binds fast the embodied self by attachment to action.

The characteristic of Rajas and its binding nature are being stated: *Know Rajas etc. Know the Guna called Rajas, to be of the nature of passion, of the nature of gratification (fondness); therefore (it is) the source of desire and attachment. Desire is hankering for things not attained, and attachment is love or great fondness for things already attained; hence Rajas is that from which desire and attachment arise. It binds fast by*

*attachment to action* for visible and invisible ends. Verily from desire and attachment comes attachment to action.

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

8. But know Tamas to be born of ignorance and deluding all embodied beings; it binds fast, O descendant of Bharata, through inadvertence, laziness and sleep.

The characteristic of Tamas and its binding nature are being stated: *But know* etc. *But know Tamas to be born of ignorance*, from that portion of Prakriti which has the power of concealment (of the real nature of things), and therefore *deluding*, confounding, *all embodied beings*. Hence that Tamas *binds fast* the embodied being *through inadvertence, laziness and sleep*. *Inadevertence*, negligence; *laziness* want of effort; *sleep*, the dissolution (inaction) of the mind through fatigue.

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥ ९ ॥

9. Sattva binds (one) to happiness, Rajas, O descendant of Bharata, (binds one)

to work, while Tamas by covering knowledge binds (one) to inadvertence, etc.

The preponderating power of Sattva, etc., to produce their respective effects is being shown: *Sattva* etc. *Sattva* binds, attaches, (one) to happiness, i.e., it inclines the embodied being to happiness even though the causes for misery and sorrow are there. Similarly, though there are reasons for happiness etc., *Rajas* (binds one) to work; while *Tamas* binds (one) to inadvertence, by covering knowledge, though it may have arisen from the company of the great, i.e., it binds one to the neglect of the teachings of the great ones. The word *Uta* means 'and so forth', indicating that Tamas binds one to laziness etc., also.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १० ॥

10. Sattva manifests, O descendant of Bharata, overpowering Rajas and Tamas; Rajas (manifests) overpowering Sattva and Tamas and likewise Tamas (manifests) overpowering Sattva and Rajas.

The reason for that is being stated: *Sattva* etc. *Sattva* manifests, originates, through the resultant of past work (Adrishta) (of the soul), overpowering, the two Gunas, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Then it binds (the



embodied self) to its effects, happiness, knowledge, etc. So also *Rajas manifests overpowering* the two Gunas *Sattva and Tamas* and then binds (the soul) to its effects, desire, activity, etc. So also *Tamas manifests overpowering Sattva and Rajas* and then binds (the soul) to its effects, inadvertence, laziness, etc. This is the idea.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

11. When through all the sense-openings in this body the light of knowledge radiates, then indeed one should know that Sattva predominates.

Now the characteristics of developed Sattva etc. are being described in the three verses beginning with: *When through* etc. *When through all the sense-openings, viz., the ears etc., in this body, the seat of experience for the soul, the light of knowledge concerning sound, etc., radiates, manifests, then by this characteristic, viz., the light, one should know, understand, that Sattva predominates.* The word *Uta* ('so forth') suggests that one should know it through signs such as happiness as well.

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

12. Greed, activity, undertaking of works, restlessness, desire—these prevail, O best of the Bharatas, when Rajas predominates.

Further: *Greed*, etc. *Greed*, the ever-increasing desire for wealth etc., already acquired in various ways; *activity* is engaging oneself always in work; *undertaking of works*, the effort to construct houses etc.; *restlessness*, constant cogitation of the kind, 'After doing this I will do that'; *desire*, longing to possess good or bad things from all sides the moment they are seen. *When Rajas predominates these characteristics prevail*. That is to say, by these characteristics one should know the predominance of Rajas.

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ १३ ॥

13... Darkness, inactivity, inadvertence, as also delusion—these prevail, O descendant of Kuru (Arjuna), when Tamas predominates.

Further: *Darkness*, etc. *Darkness*, want of discrimination; *inactivity*, absence of effort;

*inadvertence*, not remembering one's duty; *delusion*, erroneous resolve. *When Tamas predominates these characteristics prevail, O descendant of Kuru. From these one should know the predominance of Tamas.*

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।

तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४ ॥

14. If the embodied self meets with death when Sattva is predominant, then it attains the pure spheres of the worshippers of the highest deities.

The result of the predominance of Sattva etc., at the time of death in particular is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *If the embodied self etc. If the embodied self meets with death when Sattva is predominant, then it attains the pure, luminous, spheres, particular places of enjoyment, of the worshippers of the highest deities such as the Hiranyagarbha.*

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ १५ ॥

15. If it meets with death when Rajas is predominant, then it is born amongst those who are attached to work; likewise if

it meets with death when Tamas is predominant, then it is born in the wombs of irrational species.

Further: *If it meets etc. Meeting with death when Rajas is predominant, it is born amongst men attached to work; likewise if it meets with death when Tamas is predominant, then it is born in the wombs of irrational species like the animals.*

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. The result of virtuous actions is said to be Sāttvika and pure, the result of Rajas is pain, while ignorance is the result of Tamas.

How Sattva etc., through their characteristic actions produce varied results, is now being stated: *The result etc. The result of virtuous, Sāttvika, actions is said by Kapila and others to be happiness which is Sāttvika, i.e., predominating in Sattva, and pure, highly luminous. By Rajas is meant Rājasika action, as this section treats of the results of actions. The result of that is said to be pain. By Tamas is meant Tāmasika action. Ignorance, stupidity, is said to be the result of that. The characteristics of Sāttvika and other actions will be described in the eighteenth chapter (from verse 23*

onwards) as, "An action that is ordained and done without attachment" etc.

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ १७ ॥

17. From Sattva results knowledge, from Rajas only greed, and from Tamas nothing but inadvertence, delusion and ignorance.

The reason for this variety of results is being stated:—*From Sattva* etc. *From Sattva* results knowledge. Therefore the result of Sāttvika action is happiness, which is highly luminous. *From Rajas* results greed: that (greed) being the cause of pain, the result of greedy action is pain. *From Tamas* result *inadvertence, delusion and ignorance*; therefore it is but mete that the result of Tāmasika action should be ignorance. This is the idea.

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Those who abide in Sattva go upwards (to higher spheres), the Rājasika dwell in the middle (spheres), and the Tāmasika, dwelling in the functions of the

lowest Guna, go downwards (to lower spheres.)

Now the different results attained by those who follow the course of Sattva etc. are being stated: *Those who* etc. *Those who abide in Sattva*, in the function of the Sattva, i.e., who are predominantly Sāttvika by nature, *go upwards*, attain according to differences in the degree of Sattva, spheres like the world of men, of Gandharvas, of the manes, and of gods—up to the Satyaloka (the world of Brahmā), where the happiness in each succeeding sphere is a hundred times that of the preceding one. *The Rājasika*, on the other hand, being overwhelmed by desire etc., *dwell in the middle*, are born only in the world of men. *Those dwelling in the functions of the lowest Guna, Tamas*, viz.. inadvertence, delusion, etc., *go downwards*, are born in hells like Tamisra according to the degree of their Tāmasika functions.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टाऽनुपश्यति ।

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९ ॥

19. When the seer beholds no (active) agent other than Gunas, and knows that which is beyond the Gunas, he attains My being.

Having thus described the mundane world with its manifoldness, which results from the conjunction with the Gunas of Prakriti, the Lord now points out how Liberation comes through discriminating it: *When the seer etc. When the seer, becoming discriminative, beholds no agent other than the Gunas, which have transformed themselves into the intellect etc., rather realizes that the Gunas alone are performing actions, and know that Self which is beyond the Gunas, different from them and their witness, he indeed attains My being, i.e., Brahmanness.*

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।

जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

20. Having transcended these three Gunas, which are the cause of this body, the embodied self, bereft of birth, death, old age and misery, attains immortality.

Then by the cessation of all evils that result from the Gunas, he becomes blessed. That is being stated: *Having transcended etc. Having transcended, gone beyond, all the three Gunas, which are the causes of this body, which have transformed themselves into the form of this body, and bereft of birth, etc., which results from that, (the embodied self) attains immortality, the bliss of Brahman.*



अर्जुन उवाच ।

कैलिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।

किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

Arjuna said:

21. By what characteristics, O Lord, is one who has transcended these three Gunas known? What is his conduct, and how does he transcend these three Gunas?

Hearing that one who transcends these Gunas attains immortality, *Arjuna*, with a view to fully knowing the characteristics and conduct of such a person, as also the means to go beyond these Gunas said: *By what etc. O Lord, by what characteristics, by what marks manifest in him, is the embodied self who has transcended these Gunas known?* This is the question with regard to characteristics. *What is his conduct, that is to say, how does he live? And how, by what means, does he transcend, happen to go beyond, these three Gunas?* Please tell me these.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि कांक्षति ॥ २२ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

22. He who does not hate when the light (of knowledge), activity and delusion arise, O son of Pāndu, nor desires them when they cease;

Though in the second chapter (verse 54) the question, "What is the definition of a man of steady wisdom?" etc., was put and answered, yet understanding that Arjuna was asking again to know further details, *the Blessed Lord said*, described the characteristics etc. of such a person in another way, in the six verses beginning with: *He who does not* etc. Of these, through one verse He states the characteristics, *He who* etc. *Light (of knowledge)*, the result of Sattva, as stated before in, "When through all the sense-openings in the body the light of knowledge radiates," etc., (verse 11); *activity*, the result of Rajas; *and delusion*, the result of Tamas. Here only the typical characteristics of the three Gunas are referred to. As a matter of fact, when all the activities of Sattva etc., as stated before, *arise*, present themselves, as the case may be, *he who does not hate* them, because he finds them painful, *nor desire them when they cease*, because he finds them pleasing, 'he is said to have transcended the Gunas'—the construction is with the fourth succeeding verse (verse 25).

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥

23. He who rests like one indifferent, and is not disturbed by the Gunas, who, realizing that the Gunas alone function, is steady and does not waver;

Thus having given those characteristics of such a person that can be known only by him, now in order to state those characteristics that can be known by others, the answer to the second question, viz., "What is his conduct?" is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *He who rests etc. He who rests, abides, like one indifferent, like a witness, and is not disturbed*, is unshaken from his real nature, *by the Gunas*, by the effects of the Gunas, viz., happiness, misery, etc., *nay, who, realizing that the Gunas alone* are abiding in their effects, and who, through the discriminative knowledge, "I have no connection whatsoever with these," *is steady and does not waver*, does not move. The use of the suffix *ti* instead of *te* in the verb is license allowed to seers.

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥

24. Alike in pleasure and pain, Self-abiding, regarding a clod of earth, a stone and gold as of equal worth, the same towards agreeable and disagreeable objects, calm, and the same to praise and blame bestowed on him;

Further: *Alike etc.* To whom *pleasure and pain* are *alike*, because he is *Self abiding*, abides in his real nature; consequently to whom *a clod of earth, a stone and gold* are of *equal worth*, and to whom *agreeable and disagreeable objects*, which are the cause of pleasure and pain, are *the same*, *calm*, of steady intellect, and to whom *praise and blame bestowed on him* are *the same*.

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारंभपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

25. The same in honour and dishonour, the same towards friend and foe, habituated to renounce all actions—such a person is said to have transcended the Gunas.

Further: *The same etc.* *The same in honour and dishonour*, *the same towards friend and foe*, who is *habituated to renounce all actions*, undertakings producing visible or invisible results—*such a person*,

one of such conduct, *is said to have transcended the Gunas.*

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ २६ ॥

26. He who serves Me alone through the unswerving Yoga of devotion, transcends these Gunas and becomes fit for the state of Brahman.

Now the question, "How does he transcend the Gunas?" is being answered: *He who* etc. The word *cha* (and) is for the sake of emphasis. *He who serves Me alone*, the supreme Lord. *Nārāyana, through the unswerving, exclusive, Yoga of devotion, transcends, rises well above, the Gunas and becomes fit for, worthy of, the state of Brahman, Liberation.*

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाऽहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥ २७ ॥

27. For I am the embodiment of Brahman, of immutable immortality, of the eternal religion and of absolute bliss.

The reason for that is being stated: *For I am* etc. *For I am the embodiment, image, of Brahman—* I am but Brahman concentrated, even as the solar

orb is concentrated light; likewise, *of immutable, eternal, immortality*, Liberation, being ever free; likewise, *of the eternal religion*, which is the means to this Liberation, for I am pure Sattva; likewise, I am the embodiment *of absolute*, undivided, *bliss*, for I am of the nature of supreme bliss. As My worshippers would inevitably attain My nature, it has been rightly said that they become fit for the state of Brahman.

That the ocean of relative existence, which results from the attachment to the Gunas, which are subservient to the Lord Sri Krishna, is easily crossed by His devotees, is declared by the Lord in this fourteenth chapter.

**CHAPTER XV**  
**THE WAY TO THE SUPREME PERSON**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. They speak of the immutable Ashvattha tree with its root above and branches below, whose leaves are the Vedas; he who knows it is a knower of the Vedas.

Without dispassion there can be neither devotion nor knowledge. Therefore the Lord teaches clearly in the fifteenth chapter knowledge together with dispassion.

At the end of the last chapter it has been stated in the (two) verses beginning with, "And he who serves Me through the unswerving Yoga of devotion" (XIV. 26), that one who worships the Lord with unflinching devotion, attains oneness with Brahman by knowledge obtained through His grace. But as it is not possible for one bereft of dispassion to attain either unflinching devotion or knowledge, *the Blessed Lord*, in order



to expound knowledge together with dispassion, first described the nature of this mundane existence through the metaphor of a tree and said in a verse and a half beginning with: *They speak* etc. *With its root above*, whose root (source), the supreme Person, superior to things perishable and the imperishable soul, is beyond. *Below*: By this are meant entities that come into existence later than the Ishvara (the Lord) and have for their limiting adjuncts the effects, i.e., Hiranyagarbha and other beings. These are *branches* as it were (of this tree). Being perishable, there is no surety that it will last till the morrow, and hence *they speak of it as the Ashvattha*<sup>1</sup>. They also speak of it as *immutable*, because it is everlasting as a continuous stream (though ever changing). The Sruti also says: "This is the ancient Ashvattha tree whose root is above and branches (spread) below" etc. (Kath. 6. 1). *Whose leaves are the Vedas*, i.e., by propounding what is good and bad, the Vedas establish that the mundane tree gives shelter to all beings through the fruit of their work, which can be compared to the shade of leaves; hence the Vedas are the leaves as it were of this tree. *He who knows the Ashvattha tree of this kind is a knower of teachings of the Vedas*. The source

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<sup>1</sup> 'Svas'—to-morrow. That which lasts till to-morrow is 'Shvattha'. So Ashvattha means that which will not last till to-morrow, i.e., perishable.

of the mundane tree is the Lord (Ishvara) Nārāyana. Brahmā and others, who are parts of Him, stand for the branches. That mundane tree is perishable, and yet eternal like an ever-flowing stream. It becomes the resort of people through actions prescribed by the Vedas. This much is the purport of the Vedas, and therefore a man of knowledge is praised as the knower of the Vedas.

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा

गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि

कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २ ॥

2. Its branches, nurtured by the Gunas, spread below and above, its shoots are the sense-objects, and its rootlings are stretched below, producing actions in the world of men.

Further: *Its branches*, etc. Hiranyagarbha and other beings, having for their limiting adjuncts the effects, have been spoken of as the branches of this tree. Of these, those who are evil-doers *spread below*, (taking birth) among animals etc., and the virtuous *spread above*, taking birth among the gods etc. These constitute the *branches* of the mundane

tree. Further, they are *nurtured by the Gunas*, i. e., being watered as it were by the functions Sattva etc., they develop according to fitness. Further: In which tree the *shoots, leaves, are the sense-objects*, viz., colour etc., for they are connected with the functions of the senses, which stand for the tips of the branches. *And its rootlings are stretched, spread out, below*—and from the word 'cha', above as well. The tap root is the Lord alone; while these others are rootlings representing subtle impressions of particular enjoyments. Their effect is being stated: *Producing actions*, i.e., which result in actions later on, *in the world of men*. When (past) actions are exhausted, and people are born once more in the world of men on account of the impressions of what has been enjoyed in the worlds above and below, they have an inclination for actions in keeping with these impressions. The fitness to perform action is limited to this world alone, and so it is said, 'in the world of men' <sup>1</sup>.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते

नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।

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<sup>1</sup> This world is called the Karmabhumi, or the place for action, and the results of good and evil actions performed here, men reap in heaven or hell. After exhausting by enjoyment or suffering the fruit of such action, souls are again embodied as human beings.

अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल-

मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं

यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४ ॥

3-4. Its form as such is not experienced here, nor its end nor its beginning nor its continuity. Having severed this deep-rooted Ashvattha tree with the strong weapon of non-attachment, one should next seek that goal reaching which they do not return, saying, "I seek refuge in that primordial Purusha from whom this eternal process has sprung."

Further: *Its form* etc. The *form as such* of this mundane tree, i.e., as having its root above etc., is *not experienced here*, by beings inhabiting this relative world (Samsāra); *nor its end*, its limit, it being unlimited; *nor its beginning*, since it is beginningless; *nor its continuity*, its existence—it is not known how it exists. Since this tree of the world, being such, is hard to uproot and also the cause of

all suffering, therefore having severed this tree with the strong weapon of dispassion one should strive for realization. This is being stated: *Having severed etc. Having severed, cut into two, this deep rooted, firmly fixed, Ashvattha tree with the strong, fully discriminative, weapon of non-attachment, which consists in the giving up of all ideas of 'me' and 'mine', one should next seek that goal the entity called Vishnu, which is the source of this tree. What kind of goal is it? Reaching, attaining, which they do not return, are not reborn. The way of seeking this goal is being stated: I worship, seek refuge in that primordial Purusha from whom this eternal process, this ever-flowing stream of the world phenomena, has sprung. That is to say, one should seek it with such one-pointed devotion.*

निर्मनिमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा

अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।

द्वन्द्वैविमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-

र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Free from pride and delusion, overcoming the evil of attachment, ever devoted to spiritual pursuits, rid of desires and the dual thron named pleasure and pain, the wise go to that immutable goal.

Describing other means for attaining that goal the text says: *Free from* etc. From whom *pride and delusion*, egoism and false identifications have departed; by whom the *evil of attachment* to sons etc., has been overcome; who are *ever devoted to spiritual pursuits*, the knowledge of the Self; from whom *desires* have completely receded; *rid of the dual thron*g named *pleasure and pain*, freed from the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold designated as pleasure and pain, because they are the cause of them, and therefore being wise, i.e., bereft of ignorance, they *go to that immutable goal*, the state of Vishnu.

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ६ ॥

6. The sun does not illumine it, nor the moon nor the fire; That is My supreme state reaching which they do not return.

That very goal is being described: *The sun* etc. That state *the sun* etc., *do not illumine*. Attaining which the Yogis *do not return*, that is *My supreme state* or nature. As it is not an object revealed by the sun etc., the possibility of defects like materiality, heat and cold in it are refuted.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Verily, a part of Myself, having become this eternal embodied soul, draws to this world of beings the senses with the mind and the sixth, which rest in Nature (Prakriti).

If attaining Your abode they do not return, then as every one attains You at the time of dissolution (Pralaya) and deep sleep (Sushupti) according to the Sruti, "When they have become merged in the True (Sat), they know not that they are merged in the True" (Chh. 6.9.2), who then will be a Samsārin (transmigrating soul)? Apprehending such a question, the text describes the Samsārin in the five verses beginning with: *Verily, a part* etc. He who, although being but *a part of Myself*, has on account of ignorance become the *eternal embodied soul* that is always well known as the Samsārin, again *draws to this world of beings*, to the mundane existence, for the purpose of enjoying or suffering, *the senses with the mind as the sixth*, from Nature, in which they merged at the time of deep sleep and dissolution. These imply also the organs of action and the vital force. This is the idea: It is true that in deep sleep and in dissolution every individual soul, being a part



of Myself and getting merged in Me, attains Me; yet, as covered with ignorance and carrying the impressions of his past work, it gets merged in Me as endowed with My Prakriti and not in My Pure Being. As it has been said, "From the unmanifest all manifested beings are born" etc. (VIII, 18). Therefore going forth again to the relative world, the ignorant person draws out to the senses, his limiting adjuncts, which remained merged in Nature. But for men of realization, who have attained My Pure Being, there is no return.

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ ८ ॥

8. When the master (soul) acquires a body, he takes these (the six referred to above) from the one he leaves, even as the breeze carries odours from their seats, and attains (the new body).

Drawing them (the senses) what does he do? That is being stated: *When the master* etc. *When* owing to the result of his actions *the master*, the owner of the body etc., *acquires a fresh body*, *he takes these from the one he leaves*, i.e., the previous body, *and effectively attains another body*. That whenever a body is taken the senses also come

in, is shown by an example: *Even as the breeze carries odours*, blows taking with it the fine particles having odours, *from their seats*, viz., flowers etc., even so (the soul carries with it the senses, etc., i.e., the subtle body).

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ ९ ॥

9. Presiding over the ears, the eyes, the organs of touch, taste and smell, and also the mind, he enjoys the sense-objects.

Enumerating those senses, the purpose for which the soul takes them is being stated: *Presiding over* etc. *Presiding over*, resorting to, the external sense-organs, viz., *the ears*, etc., and *the mind*, the internal organ, *he*, the individual soul, *enjoys the sense-objects*, sound and the rest.

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वाऽपि भूञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।

विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १० ॥

10. The deluded do not see him departing (from this body) or residing (in it) or experiencing (objects), being associated with the senses; but they who have the eye of knowledge see him.

Do not all see such a self as different from the body and organs? It is being answered. *The deluded etc. The deluded do not see*, perceive the individual soul *departing*, going from one body to another, *or residing* in that body *or experiencing* (enjoying) the sense-objects, *being associated with* the Gunas, being endowed with *the senses*. *They* whose knowledge is their eye, i.e., the discriminative, *see him*.

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।

यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११ ॥

11. The Yogis who strive see him seated in themselves, but those who are not self-controlled, being thoughtless, do not see him in spite of striving.

It is very hard to know him, as even among those who are discriminative, only some see him while others do not. This is being stated: *The Yogis etc. Some Yogis who strive*, struggle through meditation etc., *see him*, the self, *seated in themselves*, within their body, as different from it. *Those who are not self-controlled*, not pure in mind, and therefore who are *thoughtless*, dull-witted, *do not see him*, in spite of striving by the study of the Scriptures and so forth.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. The light in the sun which illumines the world and that in the moon and the fire—know that light to be Mine.

Thus, in the verse, "The sun does not illumine it," etc., (verse 6) the supreme state of the Lord has been described, as also the non-return of those who attain it. Again anticipating the doubt that there will be no transmigrating soul (Samsārin), the nature of the individual soul as distinct from the body etc., has also been shown. Now that very nature of the Lord is being described as omnipotent in the four verses beginning with: *The light etc. The various kinds of light existing in the sun etc., which illumines the world—know all that light to be Mine alone.*

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ १३ ॥

13. Entering the earth with My energy I support the beings; and I nourish all the herbs, becoming the watery moon.

Further: *Entering etc. Entering the earth with My energy, presiding over it by My prowess,*

*I support the moving and unmoving beings. I Myself becoming the watery moon, develop all the herbs such as rice.*

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ १४ ॥

14. Residing in the bodies of beings as the digestive fire (Vaishvānara), and united with Prāna and Apāna (breaths), I digest the four kinds of food.

Further: *Residing* etc. *Becoming the digestive fire* and entering the bodies of beings, I with the outgoing (Prāna) and incoming breaths (Apāna), which excite this fire, *digest the four kinds of food*, eaten by beings, viz., what is chewed, mulled, licked and sucked. Of these, the first is that which is eaten by cutting into pieces with the teeth; for instance, a cake; the next is that which is only swallowed after mulling with the tongue; for instance, porridge; the third is that which is only taken by placing on the tongue so as to enjoy its taste; for example, molasses; and the last is that which is pressed between the teeth etc., and only the juice of it is taken, rejecting the rest; for instance, sugar-cane. This is the difference among these.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो  
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो  
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. I am seated in the heart of all beings; from Me are memory and knowledge as also their loss. I alone am to be known through all the Vedas, I am the originator of the Vedāntic tradition, and I am also the knower of the Vedas.

Further: *I am seated* etc. I have effectively entered *the heart of all beings* as the Inner Ruler. Hence *from Me* as the cause arises the *memory* concerning objects experienced before of every being, and *knowledge* due to the contact of the senses with their objects; *as also their loss*, removal. *I alone am to be known* in the form of the various gods, *through all the Vedas*, *I am the originator of the Vedāntic tradition*, i.e., enlightening teacher promulgating it through a succession of disciples, *and also the knower of the meaning of the Vedas*.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

16. There are two beings (Purushas) in this world—perishable and imperishable; the perishable one is all these creatures, and the immutable is called the imperishable.

Now, what has been referred to in the text, “That is My supreme state” (verse 6), that supreme nature of His is being shown in the three verses beginning with: *There are* etc. *There are two beings, perishable and imperishable*, which are well known in this world. They are being stated: Of these, the being called *perishable* is all these creatures, consists of bodies beginning with that of Brahmā down to immovable things, for the ignorant commonly use the word ‘person’ with respect to bodies only. *The immutable*, that which stands firm like a rock without any change when the bodies perish, i.e., the conscious principle (soul) that is the experience; he is said to be the *imperishable* being by the discriminative.

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Different from these is the supreme Being known as the supreme Self (Paramātmān), the immutable Lord, who having entered the three worlds sustains them.



The purpose for which the two (persons) were described is being stated: *Different* etc. *Different from*, other than, *these*, the perishable and imperishable beings, *is the supreme Being*. The difference is being pointed out: He is *known as*, described by Sruti texts as, Parama or *supreme* and also Ātman or *Self*. As the Self He is different from the inert perishable being, and being supreme, He is different from the imperishable being, the conscious principle (the individual soul) that is the experiencer. His being the supreme Self is pointed out: *The immutable Lord* etc. *The Lord*, the Ruler, who is *immutable*, changeless all the while, and *who having entered the three worlds*, i.e., the whole universe, *sustains*, maintains, them.

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Since I am beyond the perishable and even excel the imperishable, therefore I am well known in this world and in the Vedas as the supreme Being (Purushottama).

That He is the supreme Being of the nature described above, the Lord is showing from the derivation of His name: *Since I am* etc. *Since I am*

beyond the perishable, i.e., the entire group of inert things, being eternally free, and even excel the imperishable, the entire group of conscious beings, being their Ruler, therefore in this world and in the Vedas, I am well known, celebrated, as the supreme Being (*Purushottama*). The Scripture also says, "This Ātman is the controller of everyone, the lord of all, the ruler of all and governs all this" (Brih. 5. 6. 1).

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥ १९ ॥

19. He who, being thus undeluded, knows Me, the supreme Being, worships Me in all respects, O descendant of Bharata, and becomes all-knowing.

The result according to a knower of such a Lord is being stated: *He who*, etc. *He who, being thus*, in the above mentioned manner, *undeluded*, of fixed conviction, *knows Me, the supreme Being, worships Me alone in all respects*, in all ways, and thereby *becomes all-knowing*.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयाऽनघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ २० ॥

20. Thus this most secret doctrine has been expounded by Me, O sinless one.

Knowing this, one becomes wise, and accomplished are all his duties, O descendant of Bharata.

The subject-matter of the chapter is being concluded: *Thus* etc. *Thus*, in this brief way, *this most secret, esoteric, doctrine had been expanded by Me* in full, and not merely a chapter of twenty verses, *O sinless one*, one free from vice. Hence, *knowing this doctrine taught by Me, any and every one becomes wise, truly enlightened, and accomplished are his duties.* Therefore it goes without saying, *O descendant of Bharata*, that your duties are accomplished (having known the secret doctrine).

Having cut as under the mundane tree, the Lord has in this fifteenth chapter called 'the way to the supreme Spirit', clearly taught the supreme state.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIVINE AND DEMONIAC ATTRIBUTES

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in the Yoga of knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of the Vedas, austerity, uprightness.

In order to determine that persons who renounce demoniac wealth and take only to divine wealth are freed, these two (kinds of wealth) are distinguished in the sixteenth chapter.

At the end of the last chapter it was said, "Knowing this, one becomes wise, and accomplished are all his duties, O descendant of Bharata." Now, who knows this Truth, and who does not? As an answer to this, the sixteenth chapter is begun to distinguish between a fit and an unfit aspirant after true knowledge. It is only when the object to be accomplished has been determined that the inquiry

about a fit aspirant arises. As Kumarila Bhatta has said: "Only when a load that is to be carried by somebody has been weighed, can one fix who is to carry it."

Now the divine wealth that characterizes a fit aspirant is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *Fearlessness*, etc. *Fearlessness*, absence of fear; *purity of heart*, perfect serenity of the mind; *steadfastness in the Yoga of knowledge*, steady devotion to the means for attaining Self-knowledge; *charity*, a proper apportionment of one's food; *self-control*, control of the external organs; *sacrifice*, performing rituals like Darshapurnamāsa according to one's fitness; *study of the Vedas* (Swādhyāya), teaching and reciting the Vedas, or it may mean repetition of holy names; *austerity*, that pertaining to the body etc., to be described in the next chapter; *uprightness*, straightforwardness;

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

2. Non-injury, truthfulness, absence of anger, self-sacrifice, tranquillity, freedom from slander, kindness to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness.

Further: *Non-injury*, etc. *Non-injury*, abstaining from hurting others; *truthfulness*, speaking of things as they have been perceived; *absence of anger*, absence of agitation in the mind even when beaten; *self-sacrifice*, generosity; *tranquillity*, self-collectedness of the mind; *freedom from slander*, avoiding backbiting; *kindness to beings*, to the distressed; *non-covetousness*: the elision of the final *a* from the word '*alolupa*' in the text is a license allowed to sages; *gentleness*, meekness, not being cruel; *modesty*, feeling shy to commit a wrong; *absence of fickleness*, avoidance of useless activity;

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३ ॥

3. Boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of conceit,—these belong to one born for divine wealth, O descendant of Bharata.

Further: *Boldness*, etc. *Boldness*, courage; *forgiveness*, not getting angry in humiliation etc.; *fortitude*, steadying the mind when drooping under pain etc.; *purity*, external and internal cleanliness; *absence of conceit*, not thinking too much of oneself. These twenty-six characteristics beginning with fearlessness belong to one born for divine wealth.

That is to say, they are found in one who is born to attain Sāttvika wealth befitting a god, i.e., one for whom well-being is in store.

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पाण्ड्यमेव च ।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, rudeness, and ignorance belong, O Pārtha, to one who is born for demoniac wealth.

The demoniac wealth is being stated; *Ostentation*, etc. *Ostentation*, sanctimoniousness; *arrogance*, pride due to wealth, learning, etc.; *self-conceit*, already explained; *anger*, well known; *rudeness*, harshness; *ignorance*, want of discrimination. Demoniac implies fiendish also. These qualities, ostentation, etc., are found in *one who is born to attain demoniac wealth*—the attributes of demons and fiends.

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।

मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ ५ ॥

5. Divine wealth is deemed to lead to Liberation and the demoniac to bondage. Grieve not, O son of Pāndu, you are born for divine wealth.



Showing the result of these two kinds of wealth the text says: *Divine* etc. He who is endowed with *divine wealth* is fit for attaining the knowledge that I have expounded. But one endowed with *demoniac wealth* is ever bound. The Lord cheers up Arjuna who was perturbed on hearing this, doubting whether he was a fit aspirant or not: *O son of Pāndu, grieve not, do not be sorrowing, for you are born for divine wealth.*

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।

दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ ६ ॥

6. There are two types of beings created in this world—the divine and the demoniac. The divine type has been described at length; (now) hear from Me, O, Pārtha, of the demoniac.

In order to inculcate that the demoniac wealth should always be avoided, the text expounds it: *There are two* etc. Two, i.e., *two types*, of creation of *beings*. *Hear from Me*, from My words. Combining the demoniac and fiendish natures into one, it is stated that there are two types. Therefore there is no contradiction with the threefold nature described in the ninth chapter in the words, “Taking to the descriptive, demoniac and fiendish nature” (IX. 12).

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ ७ ॥

7. Persons of a demoniac nature do not know what to do and what to refrain from; they have neither purity nor good conduct nor truth.

The demoniac nature is being described at length in the twelve verses beginning with: *Persons* etc. *Persons of a demoniac nature do not know* how to perform right conduct or *to refrain from* wrong conduct. Therefore, verily, *they have neither purity nor good conduct nor truth.*

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।

अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. They describe the world as being without a truth, without a basis, without a God and brought about by mutual union—as nothing but originating in lust.

It may be urged: How is it they do not know how to perform acts declared by the Vedas as right conduct or to refrain from what has been declared by them as wrongful conduct? How, again, can there be any explanation for happiness and misery in this world without the acceptance of right and

wrong conduct? And how can they transgress the Lord's command with respect to purity, good conduct, etc.? Also unless God is accepted, whence can the world originate? All this is being answered *They describe* etc. *They describe the world as being without a truth*, without any authority like the Vedas and Purānas, i.e., they do not accept the authority of the Vedas etc. As it is said (by them). "Cheats, hypocrites and fiends—these three classes are the authors of the Vedas," etc. (Sar. Dar. Sang.—Chārvāka Darshana). Hence *without* any moral basis in the shape of right and wrong. They regard the manifoldness in this world as natural (spontaneous). Therefore *without a God*, as the maker and dispenser. Then from whence do they say the world has originated? This is being answered: *Brought about* etc. (The world is) *brought about by mutual union*, of man and woman. What else can be the cause of this? *Nothing but* merely *originating in lust*, i.e., they say that only the passion between the sexes as a continuous stream is the cause of this world.

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।

प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणि क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Holding this view, these ruined souls of small intellects and of fierce deeds,

are born for the destruction of the world as its enemies.

Further: *Holding* etc. *Holding this view* of the materialists, *these ruined souls*, i.e., of impure mind, of *small intellects*, accepting only what is perceived by the senses, and who are therefore of *fierce*, cruel, *deeds*, are born for the destruction of the world as its *enemies*.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।

मोहाद्गृहीत्वाऽसद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचित्रताः ॥ १० ॥

10. Resorting to insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, they of impure vows act holding false views through delusion.

Further: *Resorting to* etc. *Resorting to desires* impossible to fulfil, and possessed of *hypocrisy* etc., *they act*, take to the worship of minor deities, and so on. How? (By) *holding to false views*, holding merely *through delusion* to foolish obstinacies like, "By worshipping such and such a deity with such and such a mystic syllable I shall attain immense wealth." Of *impure vows*, those who observe vows with impure things like liquor and flesh.

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।

कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Beset with immense cares ending only with death, regarding gratification of sensual enjoyment as their highest aim, and convinced that this is all;

Further: *Beset* etc. *Beset with immense*, innumerable, *cares* which end only with death, i.e., always worried with cares; to whom *gratification of sensual enjoyment* is the *highest aim*; *convinced that this is all*, that this gratification of the sensual enjoyment is the highest aim of human life and that there is nothing else, they “strive to collect hoards of wealth” in the next verse—this is the construction. As Brihaspati’s Aphorisms say: “Sensual enjoyment is the only end of man”, “The body endowed with consciousness is the Self.”

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ १२ ॥

12. Bound by a hundred ties of expectation and given to lust and anger, they strive to collect by foul means hoards of wealth for sense gratification.

And therefore (they are) *bound* etc. *Expectation* itself is the tie; *bound*, drawn hither and thither, *by a hundred* such *ties*; whose supreme resort is *lust and anger*—they *strive*, desire, to *collect by foul means*,

by theft etc., *hoards, heaps, of wealth for sense gratification:*

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्त्ये मनोरथम् ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. "This has been gained to-day by me; this desire I shall obtain; this wealth is mine, and this other too will be mine.

By describing their fanciful kingdom, their attainment of hell is being described in the four verses beginning with: *This* etc. *Desire*, what is agreeable to the mind, *I shall obtain*. The rest is clear. This and the next two verses are to be construed as follows: "Thus deluded by ignorance" (verse 15), "They fall into hell"—in the sixteenth verse.

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥ १४ ॥

14. "That enemy has been slain by me, and others too I will slay. I am the Lord, I am full of enjoyments, I am successful, powerful and happy.

Further: *That* etc. *I am successful*, I have accomplished my purpose. The rest is clear.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।

यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्ये इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ १५ ॥

15. "I am rich and of noble birth; who else is equal to me? I will sacrifice, I will make gifts, I will rejoice" Thus deluded by ignorance,

Further: *I am rich* etc. *I am rich*, endowed with wealth etc.; *of noble birth*, aristocratic; *I will sacrifice*, i.e., by performing sacrifices etc., also I shall attain a greater name than other sacrificers; *I will make gifts* to flatterers; *I will rejoice*, enjoy myself. *Thus deluded*, made to entertain false notions, *by ignorance*.

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।

प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६ ॥

16. Perplexed by many a fancy, entangled in the net of delusion, and addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into foul hell.

Listen what such people attain to: *Perplexed* etc. *Perplexed*, distracted, *by many a fancy*, lit., by a mind entertaining many fancies; *entangled* thereby *in the net of delusion*, even as fish are fettered by a net made of strings; thus *addicted to*, engrossed in, *the gratification of desires*, they fall into foul loathsome. hell.



आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा घनमानमदान्विताः ।

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. Self-esteemed, arrogant, filled with vanity and haughtiness due to wealth, they ostentatiously perform sacrifices in name, disregarding prescribed methods.

Their fancy, 'I shall sacrifice,' that has already been referred to, is only dominated by ostentation and conceit, and not at all inspired by pure motives. This idea is being elaborated in the two verses beginning with: *Self-esteemed*, etc. *Self-esteemed*, glorified by themselves and not by good people; therefore who are *arrogant*, not *humble*; *filled with vanity and haughtiness due to wealth*, they perform sacrifices which are so only in name; or it may mean: they perform sacrifices which are meant only to gain a name such as, "He is a sacrificer", "He is a Soma sacrificer." In what way do they perform these sacrifices? They perform them *ostentatiously* and not with devotion, and *disregarding prescribed methods*.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Possessed of self-conceit, power, insolence, lust and anger, these cavilling people perform sacrifices, hating Me

(residing) in their own bodies and in those of others.

That disregard of prescribed methods is being described: *Possessed of self-conceit, etc. Being possessed of self-conceit etc., these cavilling people, people who cast aspersions on the virtues of the righteous, perform sacrifices hating Me who reside in their own bodies and in those of others as the Inner Self. Sacrifices performed just for show result in mere trouble to oneself, since they are lacking in faith. Similarly, when animals too are sacrificed without due regard for the injunctions, it merely results in injury to the Conscious Principle (manifesting through all beings). Hence it is said. 'hating Me.'*

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजलमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९ ॥

19. These cruel haters, the most degraded of men, I hurl perpetually among demoniacal species in the transmigratory worlds.

They never deviate from their demoniac nature. This is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *These cruel etc. These haters of Me, who are cruel, I hurl perpetually, always, in the transmigratory worlds, in the cycle of births and deaths and even there, among demoniacal species,*

i.e., in the bodies of cruel animals like the tiger, i.e. I give unto these sinners such fruit.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना भूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २० ॥

20. Obtaining demonic bodies, and deluded birth after birth, far from attaining Me, O son of Kunti, they fall into still lower conditions.

And they *Obtaining* etc. *Far from attaining Me*: The word एव (verily) suggests that *far from attaining Me*, they do not attain even the path of righteousness that leads to Me, but *fall into still lower conditions* like the bodies of worms and insects.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१ ॥

21. There are three types of gates to hell destructive of the self—lust, anger and greed; therefore these three should be shunned.

Of the demonic vices described above, three that are the basis of all the rest should be shunned by all means. This is being stated: *There are* etc. *Lust, anger and greed*—these are the three types of gates to hell; hence they are destructive of the self

i.e., leading to lower births. *Therefore these three should be shunned by all means.*

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. The man who has got rid of these three gates to darkness, O son of Kunti, practises what is good for himself, and thus goes to the supreme Goal.

The special result of renouncing these three is being stated: *The man etc. The man who has got rid of these three, viz, lust etc, which are the gates to darkness, hell, practises austerities, Yoga, etc, which are good for himself and thereby attains Liberation.*

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. He who, setting aside the ordinances of the Scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the supreme Goal.

The renunciation of lust etc, is not possible without the performance of one's duties. This is being stated: *He who, etc. He who, setting aside the ordinances of the Scriptures, the religious*

rites prescribed by the Vedas, *acts under the impulse of desire, acts as he likes, attains neither perfection, knowledge of the Truth, nor happiness, tranquillity nor the supreme Goal, Liberation.*

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

24. So let the Scriptures be your authority in ascertaining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what has been prescribed by the Scriptures, you should act in this matter.

The conclusion reached is being stated: *So let etc. "This ought to be done, and this ought not to be done"—in ascertaining this, the Scriptures, viz., Sruti, Smriti and the Puranas, are your sole authority. Therefore, having known the work prescribed by the Scriptures, you should do work according to your fitness, in this matter, in this sphere of work, to which you belong; for, purification of the mind, perfect knowledge and Liberation spring from that.*

By differentiating between the divine and the demoniac wealth, it is shown in the sixteenth chapter that the pure-souled alone are fit for the knowledge of Truth.

**CHAPTER XVII**  
**THE SEPARATION OF THE THREE**  
**KINDS OF FAITH**

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।  
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said:

1. Those who setting aside the ordinances of the Scriptures perform sacrifices with faith (Shraddhā)—what is their status, O Krishna? Is it Sattva, or Rajas, or Tamas?

Among the causes described above leading to the fitness for true knowledge, the Sāttvika faith is the foremost. Therefore in the seventeenth chapter the threefold secondary differentiation of faith is being stated.

At the end of the last chapter it was said: "He who, setting aside the ordinance of the Scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither perfection" etc. (XVI. 23). By this (statement) it has been declared that he who sets aside the ordinances of the Scriptures and acts under the

impulse of desire is not fit for knowledge. Now, with a view to knowing whether one who sets aside the ordinances of the Scriptures, but acts with faith and not under the impulse of desire, is fit for knowledge or not, *Arjuna said: Those who* etc. Here the words, “(Those who) setting aside the ordinances of the Scriptures perform sacrifices,” do not mean those who in spite of knowing the meaning of the Scriptures transgress them, for such people cannot be said to sacrifice with faith. Faith is belief in sacred tradition, and this, to one who has knowledge of the Scriptures, is not possible with regard to things that are contrary to them. Moreover, with respect to such people, the reply, “Threefold is that faith;” “*Sāttvika* (men) worship the gods (*Devas*),” etc., will not be compatible. Therefore the transgressors of the Scriptures are not meant here, but only those who, without striving to know the injunctions of the Scriptures either from a sense of trouble or from sheer laziness, just follow tradition and occasionally worship some deity with faith. Therefore this is the meaning: *Those who setting aside the ordinances of the Scriptures*, being indifferent to them either because they consider them to be troublesome or out of sheer laziness, and following the authority of mere tradition, *perform sacrifices with faith—what is their status*, resort? This is being inquired into in detail: *Is it Sattva, or Rajas, or Tamas?* That is to say, is such desire of theirs to worship deities etc., based on *Sattva*, or *Rajas*, or *Tamas*? The doubt



is threefold, because faith is Sāttvika, while indifference to the Scriptures from a sense of trouble or sheer laziness is Rājasika and Tāmasika respectively. If it is based on Sattva, then even these people, being Sāttvika, are entitled to the knowledge of the Self that has been described; otherwise not. This is the idea behind this question.

### श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ २ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Threefold is that natural faith of embodied beings—Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika. Hear about it.

In reply the Blessed Lord said: *Threefold* etc. This is the meaning: The faith in the worship of the Lord of those who act with the knowledge of Scriptural injunctions is of one kind alone, viz., Sāttvika. But *that faith of embodied beings* who act only according to popular usage is *threefold*, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. The reason being: It is *natural*, resulting from their nature, i.e., the impressions left in their minds in previous lives

(Samskāras). Only discriminative knowledge taught by the Scriptures is able to change nature. But this they have not. Therefore their faith arises only out of their former nature, and is of three kinds. *Hear about it*, this threefold faith. As it has been said, "In this, O descendant of Kuru, there is a single one-pointed determination" etc. (II. 41).

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३ ॥

3. The faith of each person is according to his stuff, O descendant of Bharata. A man is made up of his faith: he verily is what his faith is.

But faith is Sāttvika alone, for You Yourself have declared it to be a product of Sattva to Uddhava. As has been stated: "Control of the mind and the senses, fortitude, discrimination, devotion to duty, truthfulness, compassion, circumspection, contentment, generosity, dispassion, faith, shame, charity and the like, and taking pleasure in the Self" (Bhag. 11.20.2)—these are the modifications of Sattva.

Therefore how can faith be said to be threefold? True; yet, being inherent in a person who

is Rājasika and Tāmasika, and being thus mixed up with Rajas and Tamas, Sattva becomes threefold, and therefore faith also can be threefold. That is being stated. *The faith etc. The faith of a person, wise or ignorant, is according to his stuff, quality of his mind. Therefore the worldly man is made up of, a product of, his faith, i.e., is affected by the three kinds of faith. This is being stated: He verily is what his faith is, i.e., one is endowed with faith in accordance with his (past) faith. In other words, a person who owing to preponderance of Sattva was endowed with Sāttvika faith formerly, is on account of this inherent tendency (Samskāra) endowed again with Sāttvika faith; one who was endowed with Rājasika faith through preponderance of Rajas, again becomes of a like nature; and one who was endowed with Tāmasika faith owing to preponderance of Tamas, again becomes of a like nature. This division of Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika faith is only with respect to persons who act only according to popular usage. But with respect to those who are endowed with discriminative knowledge resulting from the Scriptures, because they conquer their nature, their faith is Sāttvika alone. This is the purport of this section.*

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४ ॥

4. The Sāttvika worship the gods, the Rājasika (worship) the Yakshas and Rākshasas, while others, the Tāmasika men, worship spirits and goblins.

The (threefold) division of Sāttvika and the rest is being delineated through differences in actions: *The Sāttvika* etc. *The Sāttvika* men worship the gods alone, who are of a Sāttvika nature. *The Rājasika* worship the Yakshas and Rākshasas, who are of a Rājasika nature. While others, those different from these two, viz., the Tāmasika men, worship only spirits and goblins. That is to say, by the inclination to worship particular deities of Sāttvika and other natures, the nature of their worshippers also as being Sāttvika etc., is to be known.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहंकारसंतुल्यः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥ ५ ॥

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यामुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६ ॥

5-6. Those men who practise severe austerities not enjoined by the Scriptures, being given to ostentation and self-conceit, possessed of desire, attachment and perti-

nacity, and senseless, torture the elements in the body, as also Me residing within it—know them to be of demoniac resolves.

Further distinctions regarding the Rājasika and Tāmasika groups are being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Those men* etc. Some, even without knowing about the injunctions of the Scriptures, are only of a Sāttvika nature on account of former good tendencies (Samskāras); others, the mediocre ones, are Rājasika by nature; and the lowest are Tāmasika by nature. *Those*, however, who are extremely unfortunate, and *who* follow custom and the practices of the heretic owing to their keeping company with such people, *practise severe*, terrible to beings, *austerities*—the reasons for which are: *being given to ostentation and self-conceit*, likewise *possessed of desire*, cravings, attachment, clinging, and *pertinacity*, foolhardiness—“know them to be of demoniac resolves.” This is the connection with the next verse (5).

Further: *Senseless*, etc. Who, being *senseless*, non-discriminative, *torture*, cause to wither by useless fasts etc., *the elements*, earth, etc., existing in *the body* as being its material cause, *as also Me* residing within it as the Inner Ruler, by transgressing My commands—those who practise austerities like this, *know them to be of demoniac*, extremely cruel, *resolves*.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।

यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७ ॥

7. The food also liked by each is threefold, as also sacrifice, austerity and gift. Listen about these distinctions among them.

To show the distinction about (people being) Sāttvika etc., even from the differences in food etc., the Lord says in the thirteen verses beginning with: *The food* etc. *The food*, cooked rice, etc., that is liked by each person is threefold according to his type; similarly sacrifice, austerity and gift are also threefold. Listen about these distinctions among them that is going to be stated. This is being declared in order that people may give up Rājasika and Tāmasika food, sacrifice, etc., and strive to increase their Sattva by resorting to Sāttvika food, sacrifice, etc.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥

8. The foods that augment life, energy, strength, health, happiness and joy, and which are savoury, oleaginous, nourishing and agreeable, are liked by the Sāttvika.

Of these, the threefold food is being described in the three verses beginning with: *The foods* etc. *Life*, longevity; *energy*, vivacity; *strength*, vigour; *health*, freedom from sickness; *happiness*, serenity of the mind; *joy*, relish. *The foods that augment*, particularly increase, *life* etc., and *which are savoury*, juicy, *oleaginous*, fatty, *nourishing*, which as serum remain long in the body, and *agreeable*, relished at sight—foods masticated, sucked, etc., which are of this kind are liked by the *Sāttvika*.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥

9. The foods that are very bitter, sour, saltish, hot, pungent, dry and burning are liked by the *Rājasika* and are productive of pain, grief and disease.

Likewise: *The foods* etc. The word *very* applies to all the seven kinds, bitter and so on. *Very bitter* like the 'Nimba' fruit. *Very sour*, very *saltish* and very *hot* are well known; very *pungent* like pepper; very *dry*, grains like Kangu and Kodrava; very *burning* like mustard. *Foods that are very bitter* etc., are liked by the *Rājasika*. Pain causing distress at the time (of eating), *grief*, subsequent depression of



spirits, *disease*, sickness. The above foods are *productive of these*.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

10. The food that is pretty cold, worthless, putrid, stale, partly eaten and impure is liked by the Tamasika.

Likewise: *The food* etc. 'Yātayāma', food cooked three hours before, i.e., which has become *pretty cold*; *worthless*, from which the essence has been pressed out; *putrid*, foul-smelling; *stale*, cooked the day before; *partly eaten*, what is left after eating by somebody; *and impure*, forbidden food, like the meat of an animal killed with a poisoned arrow. Such food is liked by the Tāmasika.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

11. That sacrifice which is performed according to scriptural injunctions by men desiring no fruit and with their mind fixed on it for its own sake is Sāttvika.

Sacrifice, too, is threefold. Of these the Sāttvika sacrifice is being stated: *That sacrifice* etc. *That sacrifice which is performed, offered, according to, scriptural*

*injunctions, as being enjoined by the Scriptures as compulsory, by men who have no desire for its fruit, is Sāttvika. How is it performed? With their mind fixed, i.e., concentrated, on it, with the idea that it must be performed for its own sake, as a sacrifice, and not for gaining any other fruit.*

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. But know that sacrifice to be Rājasika, O best of the Bharatas, which is performed aiming at its fruit, as also for ostentation.

The Rājasika sacrifice is being stated: *But know etc. But know that sacrifice to be Rājasika which is performed, undertaken, aiming at, caring for, its fruit, as also for ostentation, for parading one's greatness.*

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥ १३ ॥

13. The sacrifice which is contrary to ordinance, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of Mantras, gifts to the priests and faith, is said to be Tāmasika.

The Tāmasika sacrifice is being stated: *The sacrifice* etc. *The sacrifice which is contrary to ordinance*, in which the scriptural injunctions are not observed; *in which no food is distributed*, offered to Brāhmanas and others; *which is devoid of Mantras*, the prescribed gifts to the priests and faith, is said to be Tāmasika by the cultured.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४ ॥

14. Worship of the gods, the twice-born, the preceptor and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-injury, are said to be physical austerity.

To show the Sāttvika and other varieties of austerity, its threefold division with respect to the body etc., is stated first in the three verses beginning with: *Worship of the gods*, etc. *The wise*, knowers of Truth as well those other than one's preceptor (spiritual guide); *the worship of the gods*, the Brāhmanas (*the twice-born*) etc., and *purity* and the rest, are said to be *physical austerity*, i.e., austerity which is performed by the body.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

15. Speech that causes no worry and is also truthful, agreeable and beneficial, as also study of the Vedas, are said to be verbal austerity.

Verbal austerity is being stated: *Speech* etc., *Speech that causes no worry, fear and is also truthful and agreeable to hear and beneficial, i.e. resulting in good, as also study of the Vedas, are said to be verbal austerity, i.e., austerity performed through speech.*

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत् तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

16. Serenity of mind, kindliness, silence, self-control and purity of heart, are said to be mental austerity.

Mental austerity is being stated: *Serenity* etc. *Serenity*, composure of the mind; *kindliness*, freedom from harshness; *silence*, lit., the condition of the Muni, i.e., practice of meditation; *self-control*, withdrawing the mind from sense-objects, *purity of heart*, absence of deceit in conduct, are said to be *mental austerity*.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत् त्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

17. This threefold austerity practised with great faith by men who desire no fruit and are steadfast, is said to be Sāttvika.

Thus the threefold austerity performed through the body, speech and mind has been shown. The three divisions of this threefold austerity into Sāttvika etc., are being described: *This threefold etc. This threefold austerity practised with great, supreme, faith by men who desire no fruit and are steadfast, concentrated in mind, is said to be Sāttvika.*

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. That austerity which is practised to gain respect, honour and adoration, and that with ostentation, and which is transitory and unstable, is here said to be Rājasika.

The Rājasika austerity is being stated: *That austerity etc. Respect, verbal worship through words such as, 'He is good', 'He is a man of great austerities'; honour, physical worship by acts such as rising up and salutation; adoration, gaining wealth etc. That austerity which is practised for this purpose, and that with ostentation, and which is therefore*

*transitory, not constant, and unstable, fleeting, is here said to be Rajasika.*

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत् पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत् तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १९ ॥

19. That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture, or for the purpose of ruining another, is called Tāmasika.

The Tāmasika austerity is being stated: *That austerity etc. That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, practised through fool-hardiness due to non-discrimination, with self-torture, or for the purpose of ruining, destroying, another, like black magic, is called, said to be, Tāmasika.*

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २० ॥

20. To give is a duty—a gift given with this idea to one who will do no service in return, in a fit place and time and to a worthy person, is known to be Sāttvika.

The threefold division of gifts introduced earlier is being stated: *To give etc. To give is a*

*duty—a gift given with this conviction to one who will do no service in return, who can give no return, in a fit place, like (the holy) Kurukshetra and fit time as during an eclipse (considered auspicious for a gift) and to a worthy person—the seventh case-ending is used instead of the fourth, being grouped with ‘time’ and ‘place’, which have got the seventh case-ending—that is to say, to a Brāhmaṇa endowed with austerities and scriptural learning; or the word ‘pātre’, may be taken as having the fourth case-ending, meaning, ‘to a protector’ (from the root pā); for a Brāhmaṇa protects the giver from all dangers—such a gift is Sāttvika.*

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।

दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. That gift, however, which is given with a view to receiving in return, or looking for its fruit, or grudgingly, is said to be Rājasika.

The Rājasika gift is being described: *That gift, etc. That gift, however, which is given with a view to receiving in return with the expectation that the person would in time return the service, or looking for its fruit, i.e., with the object of attaining heaven etc. or grudgingly, with reluctance, is said to be Rājasika.*



अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत् तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. The gift that is given at the wrong place and time and to unworthy persons, without regard and disdainfully, is said to be Tāmasika.

The Tāmasika gift is being stated: *The gift etc. The gift that is given at the wrong, unholy, place, at the wrong time, during defilement, and to unworthy persons, such as rogues, (and vulgar) actors and dancers; or even where the conditions regarding the proper time, place and person are fulfilled, which is given without regard, without hospitable reception like washing the feet, or disdainfully, contemptuously—such a gift is said to be Tāmasika.*

ओं तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिंविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ २३ ॥

23. 'Om Tat Sat'—this is considered to be the threefold designation of Brahman. By that were fashioned, of old the Brāhmanas, the Vedas and sacrifices.

But then, considered in this light, all the sacrifices austerities and gifts would mostly be Rājasika or Tāmasika; so all efforts at performing

sacrifice etc., would be useless. Apprehending such a doubt, the Lord, in order to show a means by which even such sacrifices etc., can be turned into Sāttvika, says; 'Om Tat Sat' etc. 'Om Tat Sat'—*this is considered by the cultured to be the threefold designation by name of Brahman, the supreme Self.* Of these, being well known through Sruti texts like, "Om is Brahman" (Taitt. 1 8. 1). Om is the name of Brahman. Being well-known as the cause of the world, and not being cognized by the ignorant, 'Tat' also is the name of Brahman. The word 'Sat' also is the name of Brahman, for it denotes absolutely reality, goodness and auspiciousness. These three designations (of Brahman) are praised with a view to showing that all of them are capable of rectifying a defective rite (by merely being pronounced). By that threefold designation of Brahman *were fashioned, created, or the word may mean, perfected by the Lord, of old, at the beginning of creation, the Brahmanas, the Vedas and sacrifices.* Or the sentence may mean: The supreme Lord to whom this threefold designation is applied, created the Brāhmanas etc., as holiest. Therefore this threefold designation of Brahman is exceedingly praiseworthy. This is the idea.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।

प्रवर्तन्ते विघ्नानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. Therefore the acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity enjoined by the ordinance, on the part of the followers of the Vedas, by uttering the word 'Om', are always begun well.

Now in order to show the auspiciousness of every one of these three 'Om' etc., that of the 'Om' is being stated first. *Therefore* etc., Since this designation of Brahman is auspicious, *therefore the acts of sacrifices* etc., *enjoined by the ordinance, on the part of the followers of the Vedas, done by uttering the word 'Om', are always begun well, i.e.,* although they may be defective, they are made efficacious.

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Uttering 'Tat', the various acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity are performed by the seekers of Liberation without aiming at their fruit.

The second name is being praised: *Uttering 'Tat' etc. Uttering*—this word is to be repeated from the previous verse—'*Tat*' *the acts of sacrifice* etc., *are performed by the pure-minded seekers of Liberation without aiming at their fruit.* Therefore designation by the word 'Tat' is auspicious;

because, through the purification of the mind and the consequent renunciation of the desire for fruit, it creates the desire for Liberation. This is the idea.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत् प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ २६ ॥

26. 'Sat' is used to denote existence and goodness; so also, O Pārtha, the word 'Sat' is used for any auspicious act.

The auspiciousness of the word 'Sat' is being stated in the two verses beginning with: 'Sat' etc. The word 'Sat' is used to denote existence, meaning, for instance, 'Devadatta has sons etc.,' and goodness, excellence, meaning, for example, 'Devadatta's sons are excellent.' So also the word 'Sat' is used, or is apt, for any auspicious, sacramental, act like marriage, (as when we say), 'This act is auspicious (Sat).

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थाय सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७ ॥

27. Steadiness in sacrifice, austerity and gift is also called 'Sat'; as also work even done indirectly for the sake of the Lord is verily called 'Sat'.

Further: *Steadiness* etc. *Steadiness*, absorption, *in sacrifices* etc., *is also called 'Sat'*. Activity that has for its aim the supreme Self whose names are these three, like the collection of offerings for worship, cleaning of the temple and its courtyard, anointing, painting, and making flower garlands, is work for the sake of the Lord; other activity to accomplish these, like the laying out of gardens and agricultural fields and acquiring wealth, is *work done indirectly for the sake of the Lord*. The latter, *even though so indirect, is verily called 'Sat'*. Thus, since these three names are exceedingly auspicious, therefore they should be uttered for perfecting all actions. This is the sense. As a mere laudatory statement does not fit in here, it is to be taken as an injunction, according to the maxim, "It is (only) an injunction that is praised." Some (commentators) say that the present tense used in "Acts enjoined by the ordinance are begun well" etc., and "Acts are performed by the seekers of Liberation" etc., (verses 24 and 25), is to be converted into the injunctive form, as in the case of the text: "He sacrifices to the (deities called) Samidhs." This, however, does not fit in with, "*Sat* is used to denote existence and goodness," etc. (Verse 26), for there it is already a known fact (and requires no injunction). Therefore it is better to assume an injunction, as stated above.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ २८ ॥

28. Offering oblations, making gifts, austerities practised, or anything else done—without faith, are called 'Asat' O Pārtha; they fructify neither hereafter nor here.

Now, as an incentive to all action being undertaken with faith, everything done without faith is being condemned: *Offering oblations. etc. Offering oblations, making gifts, austerities practised, gone through, or anything else done—without faith, are called 'Asat'.* For they fructify neither hereafter, in the next world (*i.e.*, after death), being defective, nor here, in this world, since they bring ill-repute.

One who renounces Rājasika and Tāmasika faith and takes recourse to Sāttvika faith, is fit for realization of the Truth—this is established in the seventeenth chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE WAY OF RENUNCIATION

अर्जुन उवाच ।

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said:

1. I desire to know distinctly the true nature of renunciation (Sannyāsa), O Hrishikesa, as also of relinquishment (Tyāga), O mighty-armed One, O slayer of Keshin.

In order to decide the final goal, the essence of the whole Gita is taught clearly in the eighteenth chapter by distinguishing between renunciation and relinquishment.

In the foregoing pages, complete renunciation of action has been taught in texts like, "Renouncing all actions through his mind, he rests at ease" etc. (V. 13), and "With your mind endowed with the Yoga of renunciation" etc. (IX. 28). Likewise, the performance of action, renouncing merely its fruit, has been taught in texts like, "Renouncing the attachment for action and its fruit, ever contented, and without any refuge" etc. (IV. 20),



and "Being self-controlled, renounce the fruit of all actions' (XII. 11). And the infinitely merciful and omniscient Lord cannot teach self-contradictory things. Therefore *Arjuna*, who was eager to know the way to reconcile these two, viz., the renunciation of work and its performance, said: *I desire* etc. *O Hrishiksha*, controller of all the senses, *O slayer of Keshin*. A great demon called *Keshin*, with the form of a horse, came with a gaping mouth to devour Sri Krishna in a fight. Sri Krishna thrust His left hand into that terribly gaping mouth, and then enlarging it, He killed the demon through that alone then and there, splitting him like a cucumber; hence the term of address, *O mighty-armed One*. *I desire to know distinctly*, as distinguished from each other, the true nature of renunciation (*Sannyāsa*) and relinquishment.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Sages understand the renouncing of actions that fulfil desires as renunciation (*Sannyāsa*), and the learned declare the

abandoning of the fruit of all actions as relinquishment (Tyāga).

In reply *the Blessed Lord said: Sages etc. Sages understand, know, the renouncing, giving up, of actions that fulfil desires*, actions which are prescribed for the fulfilment of desires by texts such as, "One who desires a son should sacrifice", "One who desires heaven should sacrifice", *as renunciation (Sannyāsa), i.e., they consider the renouncing of all actions as well as their fruit to be that. The learned, the proficient, declare the abandoning of the fruit only of all actions that fulfil desires, as also of regular and occasional rites (prescribed by the Scriptures), as relinquishment (Tyāga), and not the actual renouncing of the actions themselves. It may be urged: Since no fruit is declared for the regular and occasional rites, how can there be the abandoning of their fruit which does not exist, even as a barren woman cannot give up her son? The answer is: Though no particular fruit is declared for injunctions like, "One should perform the Sandhyā ceremony daily", and "One should perform the Agnihotra all through life", as in the case of injunctions like, "One who desires heaven should sacrifice", and "One who desires cattle should sacrifice", yet as an injunction cannot prompt a discerning person to an act which serves no purpose of man, some fruit or other in general is taken for granted here, as in the case of injunctions like,*

“One should perform the Vishvajit sacrifice”, (where, though no fruit is declared, yet heaven is taken to be the fruit). It is not proper to think, in too much deference to Prabhākara’s view, that the injunction is self-sufficient and requires no fruit, for the difficulty of explaining how men may be inclined to action in the absence of any fruit, cannot be got over. Moreover, the Śruti declares fruit even for regular rites etc., in texts like, “All these attain the world of the blessed” (Chh.2. 23. 2), “The world of the Manes (is attained) through rites” (Brih. 1. 5. 16), and “By the performance of rites one gets absolved from sins” (Mah. Nār. 22. 1). Therefore it has been aptly said, “The learned declare the abandoning of the fruit of all actions as relinquishment (Tyāga).”

But then, it may be urged, from the relinquishment of fruit there would again be no inclination to action that bears no fruit. The answer is, it is not so, for all actions, according to the rule of ‘severalty of injunctions’ are meant to produce a desire for realization. The Scripture also says, “The Brāhmanas seek to know the Self through the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, charity and austerities consisting in a dispassionate enjoyment of sense-objects” (Brih. 4. 4. 22). Hence, renouncing all the fruits declared severally for each action, inasmuch

as they lead to bondage, it is possible to perform all work for getting the desire for realization. Desire for realization means the inward inclination of the intellect (i.e., introspection) through the cessation of one's identification with the body, resulting from the discrimination between the real and the unreal. The due performance by one till then, for the purification of the mind, of prescribed work which is not antagonistic to knowledge, giving up its fruit, is relinquishment of work, and not the actual giving up of work itself. The Sruti also says, "By performing work alone one should desire to live here a hundred years" (Ish. 2). But after that the cessation of all work comes about spontaneously. This is said in the *Naishkarmyasiddhi*: "All works, creating the inward inclination of the intellect through its purification, disappear like the autumnal clouds, having fulfilled their purpose" (1. 49). The Lord has also said, "But the person who delights only in the Self, is satisfied with the Self, is contented in the Self alone, has no duties to perform" (III. 17). It is also said by the sage Vasishtha: "The Yogi need not renounce work, but work gives him up, for the root of all work, viz., desire, is destroyed in him." Or he may renounce work, finding it disturbing to the practice of contemplation. As it is said by the Lord in the *Bhāgavata*: "One should perform work until one has got disgusted with it, or until one

has developed a veneration for listening to tales about Me and that kind of thing" (Bhāg. 11. 15 9); "He who, averse to the objective world, is devoted to knowledge, or not caring even for Liberation, is devoted to Me, should move about regardless of the orders of life with their respective insignia; he should be above the ties of formality" (Bhāg. 11. 13, 28), etc. Enough of digression; let us come back to the subject.

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३ ॥

3. Some philosophers declare that all action should be relinquished as being evil, while others say that the work in the form of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished.

For the ignorant, the giving up of the fruit (of work) alone is what is meant by relinquishment (Tyāga), and not the renunciation of work itself. It is to establish this firmly by refuting the opposite view that a difference of views (on the subject) is being stated: *Some philosophers* etc. *Some*, the Sāṅkhya, *philosophers declare that all action should be relinquished as being evil*, because being contaminated by evil such as killing, it produces bondage. This

is the idea: The prohibition, "One should not kill any being," declares that killing causes evil to a person. Again, injunctions like, "One should sacrifice an animal to the Fire and Moon," mentioned in the section dealing with the sacrifice, speak of killing as contributing to a sacrifice. As the two injunctions deal with separate matters, they do not come under the rule guiding a general and a particular injunction and as such, one does not annul the other. And as in all (ritualistic) work accomplished by material things there is the possibility of causing injury etc., all work should indeed be relinquished. As it has been said: "The means prescribed by the Vedas, like the temporal one, is ineffectual (for attaining a final release from mundane existence), for it is impure, perishable and results in unequal rewards." It means: That which is heard from the Guru is *Anusrava*, i.e., the Vedas, and what is declared by it is *Anusravika*. The means such as the Jyotishtoma sacrifice, prescribed by the Vedas (to get over evil), is like the temporal means—it is attended with impurity, i.e., killing, and is likewise destructible. Moreover, there is difference in the resulting heaven attained by Agnihotra, Jyotishtoma, etc., and another's superiority makes one miserable.

*While others, the Mimāmsakas say that work such as sacrifice should not be relinquished. This is the idea: Though this killing is done for the*

accomplishment of the sacrifice, yet it has to be committed by a person (the sacrificer). That killing, though done for some other purpose, is yet the cause of sin to the person. An injunction enjoins the performance of that which is prescribed, for a particular aim (viz., the benefit of the person for whom it is prescribed), for a subsidiary only subserves the purpose of the main sacrifice. But a prohibition does not similarly require that the act prohibited must subserve the purpose of something else, but only the possibility of that act being committed. For otherwise acts done through ignorance or inadvertence will cease to be sinful. Therefore, both these injunctions dealing with the same thing (viz., killing), the general injunction is cancelled by the particular one, and for that reason there is no sin in killing as prescribed by the Scripture. Therefore regular rites like sacrifice should not be relinquished. This refutes the equal force of the injunction and prohibition so as to establish the rule of the general and the particular.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to Purva Mimāṃsā, when two injunctions contardict each other, the particular one is stronger than the general and therefore annuls it. The Sāṅkhyas, who accept this rule of interpreting the Vedic texts, say that the two injunctions referred to in the commentary, viz., "One should not kill any being" and "One should sacrifice an animal to the Fire and the Moon", do not refer to the same subject-matter. The former refers to killing, while the latter refers to the ac-



निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।

त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Hear from Me the final truth about this relinquishment, O best of the Bharatas; for relinquishment is truly declared to be of three kinds, O best of men.

\* accomplishment of the sacrifice, but does not say that no sin results from such killing. Hence there being no contradiction between the two, no relation of a general and particular injunction can be established between the two, by which, according to the rule of interpreting the Vedic texts, the former can be annulled by the latter. So, according to them, while a person gets the benefits of the sacrifice, he incurs the sin of killing also with it. As more or less in all Vedic rites there is sacrifice of animals, they are all impure, and so do not help one to get beyond evil. Moreover, the result, viz., heaven attained by such sacrifice is not eternal, but temporary, for one has to return to this world after enjoyment in heaven, and there is also a difference in the result, leading to a difference in the status of people in heaven, which would lead to jealousy and hatred as in this world. So all ritualistic work should be abandoned.

The Mimamsakas however, establish this relation of a general and a particular injunction between the two, and say that the particular injunction prescribing the killing of animals annuls the general one, about non-killing, and therefore interpret the general one thus: The injunction, "One should not kill any being", is applicable to all cases except where the Scripture enjoins killing. So killing enjoined in the Scripture, as in a sacrifice, is not sinful. Therefore sacrifices are not impure and should not be abandoned. The Sāṅkhya view is thus refuted by the Mimamsakas.

Thus stating these two different views, in order to declare His own view, the Lord says: *Hear from Me* etc. *About this relinquishment*, about which there are such conflicting views, *hear the final truth* from My words. Do not disregard (this), thinking what is there to hear (in this matter), since relinquishment is well known? This is being stated: *O tiger among men*, O best of men, this relinquishment is difficult to understand, *for this relinquishment* of action *is truly*, discriminatingly, *declared* by knowers of truth *to be of three kinds*, being differentiated as Tāmasika etc. The three kinds will be declared in, "But the renunciation of obligatory work is not proper" etc. (verse 7 *et seq.*).

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Work in the form of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished, but should indeed be performed; (for) sacrifice, gift and austerity are sanctifying to the wise.

At first the final truth is being stated in the two verses beginning with: *Work* etc. *To the wise*, the discriminative, (they are) sanctifying, i.e., leading to the purification of the mind.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. But even these activities should be performed giving up attachment and fruit—this is My decided and best view.

The way these (sacrifices etc.) are to be performed to be purifying is being stated: *But even etc. These activities, sacrifices etc., which I have said to be purifying, should indeed be performed. How? They should be performed giving up attachment, giving up the idea of being a doer and merely as acts of worship to the Lord, and also giving up (the desire for) fruit, this is My decided view and therefore the best.*

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात् तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

7. But the renunciation of obligatory work is not proper; abandonment of such work from delusion is declared to be Tāmasika.

The three kinds of relinquishment introduced earlier are being shown in the three verses beginning with: *But etc.* The renunciation of action prompted by desire is proper, since it leads to bondage. *But the renunciation, giving up, of obligatory work, regular*

rites, *is not proper*, since it leads to liberation through purification of the mind. Therefore the *abandonment of such work*, arises from *delusion*—of the form that it should be abandoned, although it is prescribed. That delusion being Tāmasika, it is *declared to be Tāmasika*.

दुःखमित्येव यत् कर्म कायक्लेशभयात् त्यजेत् ।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ ८ ॥

8. If from fear of bodily trouble, one relinquishes action because it is irksome, thus performing a Rājasika relinquishment, one certainly does not obtain the fruit of relinquishment.

The Rājāsika relinquishment is being stated *if from* etc. Without the knowledge, 'I am not a doer', *if from fear of bodily trouble one relinquishes* regular rites, considering only that they are *irksome*, such relinquishment is Rājasika, for pain is Rājasika. *Performing such a Rājasika relinquishment*, a Rājasika person *certainly does not obtain the fruit of relinquishment*, viz., steadfastness to knowledge.

कार्यमित्येव यत् कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९ ॥

9. When obligatory work is performed, O Arjuna, only because it ought to be done, giving up attachment for it and its fruit—that relinquishment is regarded as Sāttvika.

Sāttvika relinquishment is being stated: *When etc. When obligatory work, work which is prescribed as compulsory, is performed with the knowledge that it ought to be done, giving up attachment for it and its fruit—that relinquishment is regarded as Sāttvika.*

न द्वेष्टचकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १० ॥

10. The relinquisher endued with Sattva and a steady understanding, having his doubts resolved, neither hates disagreeable work nor is attached to agreeable work.

The characteristic of a person well established in such Sāttvika relinquishment is being stated: *The relinquisher etc. The relinquisher endued with Sattva, permeated with Sattva, i.e., a Sāttvika relinquisher, neither hates disagreeable work, work which is painful, like taking an early morning bath in the winter, nor is attached to, relishes, agreeable*

*work*, work that gives pleasure, like bathing in the noon in summer, the reason being: he is a wise man, a man of *steady understanding*, that is to say, one who discriminates as follows: "In a state when even a great pain like humiliation by others is endured, and the pleasure of heaven etc., is renounced, what is this temporary pleasure and pain?" Therefore whose *doubts*, wrong knowledge of the nature of a desire to welcome bodily pleasure and avoid bodily pain are *resolved*.

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११ ॥

11. Action cannot be entirely relinquished by an embodied being. He who relinquishes the fruit of action, is called a relinquisher.

It may be urged that better than relinquishment of the fruit of action is the renunciation of all action, for then there being no distraction from work, one attains the joy of steadfastness in knowledge. This is being answered: *Action* etc. *Action cannot be entirely relinquished by an embodied being*, by one who identifies himself with the body. As it has been said: "Verily, no one ever remains inactive even for a moment," etc. (III. 5). Therefore, *he who*, while

performing action, *relinquishes the fruit of action is called a real relinquisher.*

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ १२ ॥

12. The threefold fruit of action—disagreeable, agreeable and mixed—accrues to non-relinquishers after death, but never to relinquishers.

The result of such relinquishment of the fruit of action is being stated: *The threefold etc., Disagreeable, birth in hell, agreeable, birth as god, and mixed, birth as man—this threefold fruit of action that is either sinful, virtuous or mixed respectively, which is well known, accrues only to non-relinquishers, i.e., those who are full of desire, after death, in the next world, for the performance of these three kinds of work is possible for them, but never to relinquishers (Sannyāsins).* By the word ‘Sannyāsin’ even the relinquishers of the fruit of action, who are being discussed, are meant, because this giving up of the fruit of action is a common factor (between them and the real Sannyāsins, who renounce work as well as its fruit), and also because this word ‘Sannyāsin’ has been used to denote the relinquisher of the fruit of action in texts like, “He who does the prescribed work without caring for the fruit, is a Sannyāsin as



also a Yogi" etc. (VI. 1). The idea is that in the case of these Sāttvika persons, sinful conduct being impossible, and the fruit of virtuous action having been given up as offering to the Lord, none of the threefold fruits of action accrues to them.

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. Learn from Me, O mighty-armed one, these five causes for the accomplishment of all work, as declared in the wisdom which is the end of all action.

But how is it possible that for a person doing work no fruit would result? Apprehending such a doubt, the Lord, in order to show that for one who has given up attachment and is free from ego-consciousness there is no connection with the fruit of work, says in the five verses beginning with: *Learn* etc. *Learn from Me*, know from My words, the *five causes* that are going to be stated, *for the accomplishment*, production, of all work. For the cessation of the idea of a doer with respect to the Self, it is necessary to know these, and so to praise them the Lord says: *As declared* etc. That by which the supreme Self is thoroughly known is Sāṅkhya (wisdom) or knowledge of the Truth, *which is also the end*, termination, of what is done, or

*action*; that is to say, the final conclusions of the Vedānta; *as declared* therein. Or it may mean: That in which the (twenty-four) categories are enumerated is Sāṅkhya, and that in which the end or conclusion is reached is *Kṛtanta*, i.e., the Sāṅkhya philosophy itself; (the causes) as declared in this. Therefore know them well.

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ १४ ॥

14. The seat of action and likewise the agent, the various senses, the different and manifold efforts—the presiding divinity being the fifth of these.

These are being enumerated: *The seat* etc. *The seat of action*, the body; *the agent*, the union of spirit and matter, i.e., egoism; *the various* different, *senses* like the eyes and ears; *the efforts*, the activities of the inhaled and exhaled breath etc., which are *different* in function and *manifold* in nature. Among *these*, *the presiding divinity*, the sun and other gods presiding over the (functions of the) eyes etc., or the Inner Ruler who is the director of everything, *being the fifth* cause.

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech and mind, whether proper or the reverse, has these five as its causes.

That these alone are the causes of all actions is being stated: *Whatever* etc. Including all actions done by the five causes enumerated, in three kinds (those done by the body, speech and mind), it is said, *by his body, speech and mind*; for it is well known that all actions are either physical, vocal or mental. *Whatever action a man performs by his body* etc., *whether* virtuous or sinful, *has these five as the causes* of it all.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारिमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Such being the case, he who owing to his unrefined understanding looks upon the Absolute Self as the agent, is foolish, and does not see.

What then? It is being stated: *Such being* etc. *Such being the case*, because these five are the causes of all actions, *he who looks upon the Absolute*, i.e., free from all limiting adjuncts, *non-attached Self* as

*the agent, owing to his understanding being unrefined by the teachings of the Scriptures and the perceptor, is foolish, and does not see truly.*

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वाऽपि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ १७ ॥

17. He who is free from the notion of 'I' (egoism), and whose understanding is not trammelled, though he kills these beings does not really kill, nor is he bound.

Who then is the wise person who was said to be not tainted by action? Such a possible question is being answered: *He who* etc. *He who is free from the notion of 'I',* i.e., is free from the idea. 'I am the doer.' Or it may mean: Free from the notion of egoism which regards the Self as the agent, on account of the discrimination that it is the body etc., that are the agents of actions. Therefore *whose understanding is not trammelled*, not attached to work, considering it as agreeable or disagreeable. Such a person who has realized the Self, which is different from the body etc., *though* in the eyes of the world *he kills these beings*, all creatures, yet in his own detached vision *does not really kill, nor is he bound* by its fruit. That is to say, where, then, is the possibility of his being bound by actions that are

intended to be a means to intuitive realization through purification of the mind? As it has been said: "He who performs actions dedicating them to the Lord and giving up attachment, is not touched by sin " etc. (V. 10).

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action. The instrument, the object and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

It is to establish the point, "Though he kills, he really does not kill, nor is he bound," that the impulse and the basis of action are being described so as to show that the Self, which is without qualities, has no connection with the cause, the basis and the fruit of action, which are all made up of the three Gunas. *Knowledge* etc. *Knowledge*, the understanding that this is a means to obtain the desired object; *the knowable*, the work that achieves what is desired; *the knower*, the person having such knowledge—thus *threefold is the impulse to action*, i.e., that by which action is prompted. That is to say, these three, viz., knowledge etc., are the incentives to action. Or *Chodanā* (incentive) may mean scriptural injunction. As Kumarila Bhatta has said: Direction (*Chodanā*);

prescription and injunction are synonymous. In that case the meaning of the sentence would be: All injunctions with respect to work take effect depending on the threefold cause, viz., knowledge etc., which are made up of the three Gunas. As has been said: "The Vedas deal with subjects coming under the three Gunas" etc. (II. 43). And likewise: *The instrument*, the best means for effecting knowledge (viz., the sense-organs); *the object*, what is most desired; and *the agent*, he who performs the action; *Karma-Sangraha* means that which epitomises action; in other words, the three factors of work, viz., instrument etc., form the basis of action. The other three factors, viz., the person for whom something is done and so forth, merely help to bring about an action indirectly, and are not the basis of action directly. Hence the triad consisting of the instrument etc., are alone called the heads of action

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ १९ ॥

19. Knowledge, action and agent are declared in the science of the Gunas to be of three kinds only, according to the distinction of the Gunas; of them also hear duly.

What follows from it? It is being stated: *Knowledge* etc. In the science of the Gunas, that in which the Gunas are described or propounded thoroughly according to their effects, i.e., in the Sāṅkhya Philosophy, *knowledge, action and agent are declared to be of three kinds only, according to the distinction of each in respect of the Gunas* such as Sattva. *Of them also, viz., knowledge etc., which are going to be described, hear duly.* In 'three kinds only', the word 'only' is for negating all activity etc., in the Self independent of its adjuncts consisting of the Gunas.

In the fourteenth chapter, how the Gunas bind has been described in texts like, "Of these Sattva from its stainlessness" etc. (verse 6). In the seventeenth chapter, in texts like, "The Sāttvika men worship the gods" etc. (verse 4), describing the threefold nature that results from the Gunas, it has been declared that one should strive for Sāttvika nature by discarding Rājasika and Tāmasika natures and by taking Sāttvika food etc. Here, however, in order to show that action, its factors and its fruit have no connection with the Self, all these are stated to be made up of the Gunas. This, we should note is the difference.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २० ॥



20. The knowledge by which one sees the one undivided, imperishable substance in all beings which are divided, should be known to be Sāttvika.

Of these, the threefold nature of knowledge as Sāttvika etc., is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *The knowledge etc. The knowledge by which one sees in all beings, from Brahmā down to immoving objects, which are divided, distinguished from one another, the one undivided underlying, imperishable changeless, substance, viz., the supreme Self, should be known to be Sāttvika.*

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।

वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. But the knowledge by which one sees as distinct, in all beings, different entities of various kinds, should be known to be Rājasika.

The Rājasika knowledge is being stated: *But etc. But the knowledge by which one sees as distinct—this clause is elaborated in the rest of the verse—in all beings, or bodies, really different entities, or souls, of various kinds, diversely conditioned by pleasure, pain, etc., should be known to be Rājasika.*

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन् कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।

अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत् तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. Whilst that knowledge which is confined to a single product as if it were the whole, which is irrational, not founded upon truth, and trivial, is declared to be Tāmasika.

Tāmasika knowledge is being stated: *Whilst etc. Knowledge which is attached to a single product, the body or an image, for instance, as if it were the whole, the all, believing that this much is the Self or the Lord, which is irrational, not based on reason, not founded upon truth without any support in reality, and therefore petty, trivial, because it concerns very limited things and produces meagre results—knowledge that is of this kind is declared to be Tāmasika.*

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत् तत् सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ २३ ॥

23. An action that is ordained, performed without attachment, free from attraction or repulsion, by one not coveting its fruit, is declared to be Sāttvika.

Now the threefold action is being described in the three verses beginning with: *An action etc.*

*An action that is ordained, prescribed as a regular rite, performed without attachment, without hankering; free from attraction or repulsion, which is not done out of love for one's son etc., or hatred towards one's enemy; by one not coveting its fruit, i.e., a disinterested agent, as opposed to one who desires its fruit, is declared to be Sāttvika.*

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।

क्रियते बहुलायासं तद् राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. But an action that is done by a person seeking desire or possessed of conceit, and that with much trouble, is declared to be Rājasika.

Rājasika action is being described; *But an action etc. But an action that is done by a person seeking desire, craving fruit, or possessed of conceit, deep-rooted egotism of the kind, 'who else is such a Vedic scholar as myself?' and which, again, is done, with much trouble, with great strain, is declared to be Rājasika.*

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसा मनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।

मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत् तत् तामसमुच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

25. That action which is undertaken through delusion, without regard to consequence, loss, hurtfulness and capacity, is declared to be Tāmasika.

Tāmasika action is being described: *That action etc. That action which is undertaken through mere delusion, without regard to, without considering, consequence, lit., that which follows, i.e., the good or evil that would come in its wake; loss, expenditure of wealth; hurtfulness, injury to others; and capacity, one's own strength, is declared to be Tāmasika.*

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६ ॥

26. An agent who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endued with fortitude and enthusiasm, and unaffected by success or failure, is called Sāttvika.

The threefold agent is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *An agent etc. Free from attachment, ardent longing; non-egoistic, not given to boasting; fortitude, steadiness; enthusiasm, zeal; endued with, possessed of these, and unaffected, i.e., free from joy and despondency at the success or failure of a work that was undertaken—such an agent is called Sāttvika.*

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।

हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

27. An agent who is interested, desirous of the fruit of action, greedy, malevolent, unclean and subject to elation and dejection, is declared to be Rājasika.

The Rājasika agent is being described: *An agent etc. Interested, affectionate to sons etc.; desirous of, longing for, the fruit of action; greedy, covetous of another's property; malevolent, inclined to killing; unclean, not observing the prescribed cleanliness; subject to elation and dejection at gain or loss—such an agent is declared to be Rājasika.*

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैऋतिकोऽलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

28. An agent who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceptive, overbearing, indolent, despondent and procrastinating is said to be Tāmasika.

The Tāmasika agent is being described: *An agent etc. Unsteady, careless; vulgar, wanting in discrimination; arrogant, not humble; deceptive, concealing one's strength; overbearing, insulting others; indolent, wanting in effort; despondent, sorrowing; procrastinating, not accomplishing even in a month what ought to be done that very day or the day after—such an agent is said to be Tāmasika.*

It should be noted that by the description of the threefold agent the threefold knower also is described, and by the description of the threefold action the threefold knowable also is described. By the description of the threefold understanding the threefold instrument will also be described.

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।

प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय ॥ २९ ॥

29. Listen now to the threefold variety, according to the Gunas, of the understanding and tenacity, as I declare them exhaustively and severally, O Dhananjaya.

Now is being introduced the threefold distinction of the understanding and tenacity: *Listen* etc. The meaning is clear.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३० ॥

30. That understanding which knows inclination and abstention, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and absence of fear, and bondage and Liberation, is Sāttvika, O Pārtha.

Of these the threefold understanding is being stated in the three verses beginning with: *That understanding* etc. *Inclination* to righteous action; *abstention* from unrighteous action; *what ought to be done and what ought not to be done* at a particular place or time; *fear and absence of fear*, good and evil arising from what ought and ought not to be done respectively, *and the way to bondage and Liberation—that understanding*, inner-organ (mind), *which knows this, is Sāttvika*, ‘That understanding by which a person knows’ etc.—should have been the correct expression, but here the agency is attributed to the instrument, just as we say, ‘The fuel is cooking.’

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।

अयथावत् प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१ ॥

31. That understanding by which one knows incorrectly righteousness and unrighteousness, and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, is Rājasika, O Pārtha.

Rājasika understanding is being stated: *That* etc. *Knows incorrectly*, so as to cause doubt. The rest is clear.

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

सर्वार्थान् विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३२ ॥



32. That understanding which, enveloped in ignorance, regards unrighteousness as righteousness and all things in an inverted way, is Tāmasika, O Pārtha.

The Tāmasika understanding is being described. *That understanding* etc. That is to say, the understanding that grasps things in an inverted way is Tāmasika. *Understanding*, the inner organ (mind) already referred to. Knowledge is a function of that. Fortitude also is a function of it. Or it may mean: Understanding also is a determinative function of the entity that is the inner-organ. Though the inner-organ has many functions like desire and aversion, yet as understanding, tenacity and happiness, which lead to righteousness and unrighteousness, fear and absence of fear, are the chief ones, their threefold nature is stated. These are suggestive of the rest.

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।

योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३ ॥

33. That tenacity, unswerving through Yoga, by which one controls the functions of the mind, the breaths (Prānas) and the senses, is Sāttvika, O Pārtha.

Now the threefold tenacity is being described in the three verses beginning with: *That tenacity*

etc. *That tenacity, which is unswerving, which does not think of anything else, through Yoga or the concentration of the mind, by which one controls, regulates, the functions of the mind, the breaths and the senses, is Sāttvika.*

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान् धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।

प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३४ ॥

34. But the tenacity by which one holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth, desiring their fruit because of attachment, is Rājasika, O Pārtha.

The Rājasika tenacity is being described: *But etc. The tenacity by which one holds fast primarily to duty, pleasure and wealth, does not give them up, and because of attachment to them becomes desirous of their fruit, is Rājasika.*

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मोधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३५ ॥

35. The tenacity by which a stupid person does not give up sleep, fear, grief, depression and pride, is Tāmasika, O Pārtha.

The Tāmasika tenacity is being described: *The tenacity etc. The tenacity by which a stupid*

*person*, a person whose intellect is wanting in discrimination, *does not give up sleep* etc.—*Svapna* (primarily meaning dream) here means sleep—but indulges in them again and again, *is Tāmasika*.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।

अभ्यासाद् रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ ३६ ॥

यत् तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।

तत् सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ ३७ ॥

36-37. Now hear from Me, O Prince among the Bharatas, of the threefold happiness: The happiness which one relishes through practice, in which one comes to the end of all pain, and which is like poison at first, but like nectar at the end, is declared to be Sāttvika, born of the serenity of the understanding that concerns itself with the Self.

The threefold happiness is being introduced in half a verse: *Now hear* etc. The meaning is clear. Of these, the Sāttvika happiness is being stated in a verse and a half beginning with: *The happiness* etc. *The happiness which one relishes through practice*, by familiarity, and not suddenly like sense pleasure, and rejoicing *in which one comes to, reaches, the end*,

cessation, of all pains. Of what kind is it? *Which is etc.*—Something *which at first*, at the beginning, is like poison, seems to be painful, being dependent on the control of the mind, *but at the end is like nectar*. *Ātmabuddhi*—the understanding that concerns itself with the Self; serenity of that, that is, its resting as transparent by the giving up of the impurities, Rajas and Tamas; the happiness that results from this is called *Sāttvika* by the Yogis.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद् यत् तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत् सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. The happiness that arises from a contact between the objects and the senses, which is like nectar at the beginning, but like poison at the end, is said to be *Rājasika*.

The *Rājasika* happiness is being described: *The happiness etc.* The well known happiness that arises from a contact between the objects and the senses, for example, enjoyment, which is like, comparable to, nectar at the beginning, at first, but like poison at the end, because it causes pain both here and hereafter, is said to be *Rājasika*.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत् तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९ ॥

39. That happiness which is self-delusive both at the beginning and at the end, and which arises from sleep, lassitude and inadvertence, is said to be Tāmasika.

The Tāmasika happiness is being described *That* etc. *That happiness which at the beginning, at the first moment, and also at the end, subsequently, is self-delusive—that is being explained—which arises from sleep, lassitude and inadvertence, i.e., fantasy, to the neglect of the duty at hand, is said to be Tāmasika.*

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात् त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ ४० ॥

40. There is no being on earth or again in heaven among the gods, that is free from these three Gunas born of Nature.

Summing up even what has not been specifically mentioned, the subject-matter of the section is being concluded: *There is* etc. *There is no being, no creature or anything else, on earth among men etc., or in heaven among the gods, that is free from, devoid of these three Gunas, Sattva etc., born of Nature.* That is to say, nowhere does such a being exist.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१ ॥

41. The duties of the Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, as also of the Sudras, are clearly divided, O scorcher of foes, according to the dispositions born of their own nature.

But if everything, such as action, agent and fruit (of action), as also all beings are made up of the three Gunas, then how can there be Liberation for beings? In answer to such a question, in order to show in a nutshell the purport of the whole Gitā, viz., that beings can attain Liberation by knowledge attained through the grace of the Lord by worshipping Him through the performance of the duties prescribed according to individual fitness, the Lord begins a new topic from this verse, 'The duties' etc. till the end of the chapter. *O scorcher, scourge of foes, the duties of the Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, as also of the Sudras, are clearly divided*, are prescribed with sharp distinction. The Sudras are mentioned separately from the compound, since they are distinct (from the other three) by not being twice born. The typical characteristics for this division (of duties) are being stated: According to the Gunas (Sattva etc.), serving as typical characteristics, which give rise to

the Sāttvika and other natures (*Svabhāva*). Or it may mean: Arising from the tendencies acquired in their past births (*Svabhāva*). Of these, the Brāhmanas have a predominance of Sattva; the Kshatriyas, of Rajas mixed with some Sattva; the Vaishyas, of Rajas mixed with some Tamas; and the Sudras, of Tamas mixed with some Rajas.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forbearance, and also uprightness, knowledge, realization and faith, are the duties of a Brāhmana born of his nature.

Of these, the natural duties of a Brāhmana are being stated: *Serenity* etc. *Serenity*, control of the mind; *self-control*, control of the external senses; *austerity* of the body etc, mentioned earlier; *purity*—external and internal; *forbearance*, forgiveness; *uprightness*, straightforwardness; *knowledge*, scriptural; *realization*, direct intuition; *faith*, the conviction that there exists a next world—these, the control of the mind etc., are the duties of a Brāhmana born of his nature.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।

दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४३ ॥



43. Heroism, boldness, firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from the battle, generosity and lordliness, are the duties of a Kshatriya born of his nature.

The natural duties of a Kshatriya are being stated: *Heroism* etc. *Heroism*, valour; *boldness*, spiritedness; *firmness*, steadiness; *dexterity*, skillfulness; *not fleeing from the battle*, not turning away (from the enemy), *generosity*, liberality; *lordliness*, leadership—these are the duties of a Kshatriya born of his nature.

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।

परिचर्यात्मिकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of a Vaishya born of his nature; and work of the nature of service is the duty of a Sudra born of his nature.

The duties of a Vaishya and a Sudra are being stated: *Agriculture* etc. *Agriculture*, cultivation; one who raises cattle is a cattle raiser; the calling of such a person, i.e., *cattle-rearing*; *trade*, buying, selling, etc.—these are the duties of a Vaishya born of his nature. *Work of the nature of service* to the other three castes is also the duty of a Sudra born of his nature.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ ४५ ॥

45. Devoted to his own duty, a man attains perfection. Listen how one engaged in one's own duty attains perfection.

How such duties of the Brāhmana and others lead to knowledge is being stated: *Devoted etc. Devoted to, heartily engaged in, duty according to his own qualifications, a man attains perfection, fitness for knowledge. How duties lead to knowledge is being stated in a verse and a half: Listen etc. Listen how, by what method, one sincerely engaged in one's own duty attains knowledge of the Truth.*

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकमणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ४६ ॥

46. From whom proceeds the activity of all beings, and by whom all this is pervaded—worshipping Him through his own duty a man attains perfection.

That method is being described: *From whom etc. From whom, the Lord, the Inner Ruler, proceeds the activity, effort, of all beings or creatures, and by whom as the cause all this universe is permeated,*

*pervaded—worshipping that Ishvara (Lord) through his own duty a man attains perfection.*

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन् नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Better is one's own duty, though defective, than the duty of another, well performed. Doing the duty ordained by one's own nature, one incurs no sin.

The result of the qualifying phrase, 'through one's own duty' is being stated: *Better etc. Though defective, one's own duty is better than, superior to, the duty of another well performed.* You must not think that living on alms etc., which is the duty of another (a Brāhmaṇa), is superior to your own duty of fighting etc., though attended with the killing of relatives and so forth. For *doing the duty ordained, prescribed, by one's own nature* as declared earlier, *one incurs no sin.*

सहजं कर्म कोन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ ४८ ॥

48. One should not, O son of Kunti, relinquish the duty to which one is born, although it may be attended with evil; for all undertakings are covered by defect, as fire by smoke.

If, however, according to the Sāṅkhya view-point, you think the duty of another to be superior, considering the evil of killing etc., in your own duty, then you should know that the duty of another is also equally attended with evil. Having this in view the Lord says: *One should not* etc. *One should not relinquish the duty to which one is born*, which is ordained by one's nature, *although it may be attended with evil; for all undertakings, all actions, yielding visible or invisible results, are indeed covered by some defect or other, even as fire is enveloped by its concomitant smoke.* Hence, just as discarding the evil—smoke—the heat of the fire is used to remove darkness, cold, etc., even so rejecting the evil part in work, the good part alone is accepted for the purification of the mind. This is the sense.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ ४९ ॥

49. He, whose understanding is unattached everywhere, whose mind is conquered, who is bereft of desires, attains by renunciation that supreme state of freedom from action.

Anticipating the question, "How can one in doing work get only the good out of it, rejecting its evil part?"—the Lord says: *He whose* etc. *He,*

*whose understanding is unattached, devoid of attachment, whose mind is conquered, i.e., who is free from egotism, who is bereft of desires, from whom desires for results have gone—that person by such renunciation, consisting in the giving up of attachment for work as also for its fruit, as has been referred to earlier in, “That relinquishment is considered to be Sāttvika” (verse 9), attains that state of freedom from action, purity of mind, in the form of the cessation of all activity. Though the performance of work giving up attachment and fruit is also no activity, since there is no idea of a doer, for it is stated in the four verses beginning with, “The man of (selfless) action, who knows the Truth, thinks, ‘I am not doing anything’ etc. (V. 8), yet, by this renunciation described above, he attains the supreme state of freedom from action of the kind described in, “The self-controlled embodied being, renouncing all actions through his mind” etc. (V. 13), which is another name for the state of the highest Sannyāsin, the Paramahamsa.*

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।

समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ ५० ॥

50. Learn from Me in brief, O son of Kunti, how reaching (such) perfection he attains Brahman, which is the supreme consummation of knowledge.

The manner in which such a Paramahansa attains Brahmanhood through steadfastness in knowledge, is being stated in the six verses beginning with: *Learn from Me* etc. *How, reaching the perfection of freedom from action, he attains Brahman, learn that manner from My words just in brief.*

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।

शब्दादीन् विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥ ५१ ॥

51. Endued with a pure understanding, controlling the mind with tenacity, relinquishing sense-objects such as sound, and laying aside likes and dislikes.

That is being stated: *Endued* etc. *Endued* with a pure understanding, with the Sāttvika understanding, already referred to, purified in the manner described above, *controlling the mind*, making that very understanding steady, *with Sāttvika tenacity*, relinquishing sense-objects such as sound, and laying aside likes and dislikes with respect to them—these words are to be construed with, ‘He is fit for becoming Brahman in the third verse (of this quarter).

विविक्तसेवी लब्ध्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ ५२ ॥

52. Resorting to a sequestered place, eating little, controlled in speech, body and mind, always devoted to the Yoga of contemplation, cultivating dispassion.

Further, *Resorting* etc. *Resorting to a sequestered place* residing in a pure place, *eating little*, moderately, and by these means *controlled in speech, body and mind*, i.e., having speech, body and mind under restraint, *always devoted to that Yōga*, union with Brahman, which comes *of contemplation, cultivating again and again firm dispassion* for keeping the contemplation etc., unbroken.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ ५३ ॥

53. Forsaking egotism, power, arrogance, desire, anger and superfluous things, free from the notion of 'mine' and tranquil, he is fit for becoming Brahman.

Further, *Forsaking* etc. *Forsaking egotism* of the form, 'I am free from worldly attachment'; *power*, foolhardiness; *arrogance*, the inclination to go astray from a sense of spiritual strength; *forsaking*, giving up completely, *desire*, for objects of enjoyment, even though attained through Prārabdha, *anger and superfluous things, free from the notion of*



‘mine’ with regard to objects of enjoyment that have come to him in spite of himself, *and tranquil* i.e., having attained supreme peace, *is fit for becoming Brahman*, fit to remain steady in the idea, ‘I am Brahman,’

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ ५४ ॥

54. Becoming Brahman and tranquil-minded, he neither grieves nor desires; alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me.

The result of remaining steady in the idea ‘I am Brahman,’ is being stated: *Becoming Brahman* etc. *Becoming Brahman*, i.e., remains in Brahman (consciousness), *and tranquil-minded*, he neither grieves for what is lost *nor desires* what is not attained, for he does not identify himself with the body etc. Therefore being *alike to all beings*. owing to the absence of distractions arising out of desire and aversion, *he attains supreme devotion to Me* which consists in looking upon all beings as Myself.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ ५५ ॥

55. By devotion he knows Me truly, how much and what I am. Then, having known Me truly, he forthwith enters into Me.

Then, *By devotion* etc. *By* that supreme devotion *he knows Me truly*: As of what nature? *How much*, i.e., all pervading, *and what*, i.e., Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute, *I am*. Then, *having known Me truly*, after that when his knowledge, too, is at rest, *he enters into Me*, that is to say, he becomes one with supreme Bliss.

सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ ५६ ॥

56. Even performing all works always, taking refuge in Me, he attains through My grace the eternal and immutable state.

The manner referred to above, in which Liberation results from the worship of the Lord through one's duties is being concluded: *Even performing* etc. *Performing all works*, regular and occasional rites, as also actions performed with desire, in the way described above, *taking refuge in Me*, having Me as the sole resort and not results like heaven, *he attains through My grace*, the eternal, beginningless, immutable everlasting supreme state of Vishnu.

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ ५७ ॥

57. Resigning mentally all actions to Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, and resorting to Yoga through the intellect, ever fix your mind on Me.

Since it is so, therefore *Resigning* etc. *Resigning*, offering, *mentally all actions to Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal*, the highest end of life to be attained, *resorting to Yoga through the intellect*, whose nature is determination, *ever*, i.e., even while performing work, *fix your mind on Me* alone in the manner stated in: "The ladle is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman" etc. (IV. 24).

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात् तरिष्यसि ।

अथ चेत् त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥ ५८ ॥

58. Fixing your mind on Me, you will overcome all difficulties through My grace. But if from self-conceit you do not listen to Me, you will perish.

Hear what will follow from that: *Fixing* etc. *Fixing your mind on Me, you will through My grace overcome all difficulties* whatsoever, all wordly troubles difficult to get over. The evil that would

result from a contrary behaviour is being stated: *But if, on the contrary, from self-conceit, from the notion that you are wise, you do not listen to what I have said, then you will perish, fail to attain the goal of life.*

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।

मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥ ५९ ॥

59. That, indulging in self-conceit, you think, 'I will not fight'—vain is this resolve of yours. Your nature will compel you (to fight).

'I would rather die, but I will not fight with my relations'—in answer to such a position the Lord says: *That, indulging etc. Disregarding what I have said, and indulging merely in self-conceit, that you think, resolve, 'I will not fight'—vain is this resolve of yours, for you are not a free agent. That is being stated: Your nature, evolving as Rajas, will compel you, undoubtedly engage you in battle.*

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात् करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ ६० ॥

60. O son of Kunti, what you out of delusion do not wish to do, you shall do in

spite of yourself, fettered by your own duty born of your nature.

Further, *O son of Kunti*, etc. *Your nature*, the tendencies of past life that are the cause of your birth as a Kshatriya; *duty born of this*, viz., valour etc., already enumerated—*fettered*, constrained, by this that you are, *what*, viz., work, *you out of delusion do not wish to do shall surely do in spite of yourself*.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ ६१ ॥

61. In the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, resides the Lord, whirling all of them by His Māyā as if they were mounted on a machine.

Thus in the two (preceding) verses the subservience of all the beings to Prakriti, to one's own nature and to duty has been stated according to the views of the Sāṅkhyas etc. Now the Lord declares His own view in the two verses beginning with: *In the heart* etc. *Within the heart of all beings resides the Lord*, the Inner Ruler. Doing what? *Whirling*, engaging in their particular duties, *all beings by His own power called Māyā*, even as in the world the stage-manager makes all artificial beings (dolls)

fixed on a wooden machine move about. Or it may be interpreted thus: *Whirling all beings mounted on machines*, bodies, i.e., the individual souls that identify themselves with their bodies. As the Svetāshvātara Upanishad says, "God, who is one only, is hidden in all beings. He is all-pervading, and is the Inner Self of all creatures. He presides over all actions, and all beings reside in Him. He is the witness, and He is the Pure Consciousness free from the Gunas" (Svet. 6.11); and the section dealing with the Internal Ruler in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad (ch. 3, sec. 7) also says: "He who inhabits the self but is within it, whom the self does not know, whose body is the self and who controls the self from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal Self," etc.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ ६२ ॥

62. Take refuge in Him alone with all your heart, O descendent of Bharata (Arjuna); by His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

*Take refuge* etc. Since all individual souls are thus dependent on the Lord, therefore giving up self-conceit, *take refuge in Him*, the Lord, *along with*

*all your heart, with your whole soul. Then it is by His grace that you shall attain supreme peace as also the eternal, everlasting, abode of the Lord.*

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ ६३ ॥

63. Thus has knowledge more secret than all secrets been declared to you by Me; reflect on it fully and act as you like

Concluding the teaching of the whole Gitā the Lord says: *Thus etc. Thus, in this way, has knowledge been declared, taught, by Me who am omniscient and extremely gracious. What kind of knowledge? More secret than all secrets like the esoteric knowledge about mystic syllables (Mantras) and Yoga. Reflect on, consider fully, it, the Gitā Scripture that has been taught by Me, and then act as you like. The idea being, if you reflect on it, then your delusion will be removed.*

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ ६४ ॥

64. Hear again My supreme word, the most secret of all. Because you are dearly beloved of Me, therefore I shall tell you what is good for you.



For those who are unable to reflect on the very profound teaching of the *Gītā* in its entirety, the Lord graciously tells the essence of it in the three verses beginning with: *Hear again* etc. Though My teachings, the most secret of all secrets, have been declared from place to place, yet *hear again* what I am going to say. The reason for declaring it again and again is being stated: Considering the fact that *you are dearly, very much, beloved of Me*. For that very reason *I shall tell you what is good for you*. Or it may mean: *Because* I have come to the conclusion that *you are beloved of Me*, and what I am going to tell you is unassailable, or supported by all proofs, *therefore I shall tell you*. Some read 'Dridhamati' (of firm resolve) instead of 'Dridham iti.'

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६५ ॥

65. Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow down to Me; then you shall come to Me. Truly do I promise to you, for you are dear to Me.

That is being stated: *Fix* etc. *Fix your mind on Me*, remember Me, *be devoted to Me* alone, habitually *worship Me*, and *bow down to Me* alone. Living thus, *you shall come to Me* through knowledge attained

through My grace. And do not entertain any doubt about this, *for you are dear to Me*; therefore *do I promise to you, give you My word, truly.*

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६ ॥

66. Giving up all duties, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve.

More secret than even what has been stated is being declared: *Giving up* etc. With the firm conviction that everything will come through devotion to Me, *giving up* the slavery to injunctions, take *refuge in Me alone.* Do not grieve that by living like that you will incur sin for abjuring your duties, for *I will liberate you*, whose sole refuge is Myself *from all sins.*

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ ६७ ॥

67. Never should this be declared by you to one who is devoid of austerities, or who is not a devotee, nor to one who does not wish to hear it, nor one who cavils at Me.

Having thus taught the essence of the teaching of the Gitā the Lord is now stating the rule as to the handing down of the instruction: *Never* etc. This doctrine of the Gitā *should never be declared by you to one who is devoid of austerities, who does not perform his duties, or to one who is not a devotee, who is devoid of devotion to the preceptor and the Lord, nor to one who does not do service; or it may mean, to one who does not wish to hear; nor should it be told to one who cavils at Me, the Lord, i.e., to one who, thinking Me to be an ordinary mortal, speaks ill of Me by imputing faults to Me.*

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तैष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ ६८ ॥

68. He who will impart this profound secret to My devotees, has supreme devotion to Me, and being free from doubt comes to Me alone.

The result of teaching the Gita to My devotees who are free from the defects mentioned (above) is being stated: *He who* etc. *He who will impart this to My devotees, has supreme devotion to Me, and being thereby free from doubt attains Me alone.*

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृतमः ।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ ६९ ॥

69. There is none among men who does dearer service to Me than he, nor will there be any; and there is none on earth dearer to Me than he.

Further, *There is* etc. *There is none*, whatsoever, among men who does dearer service, anything more pleasing, to Me than he who explains the Gitā scripture to My devotees, nor will there be any in future; and there is none who is dearer to Me also than he; and the sense is, nor will there be any in future.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहुमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥ ७० ॥

70. And he who will study this sacred dialogue between us, will be sacrificing to Me through the knowledge sacrifice; this is My opinion.

The fruit that comes to one who studies the Gitā is being stated: *And he* etc. *And he who will study*, repeat like Japa, this sacred, righteous, dialogue between us, Sri Krishna and Arjuna, will be sacrificing to Me through the Knowledge-sacrifice, which is the best of

all sacrifices; *this is My opinion*. Even though he simply repeats the Gitā without understanding its meaning, yet, hearing it, I shall know that he is revealing Me alone. Just as in the world when anyone casually utters the name of some one at anytime, the latter thinks that it is he who is called and comes to that person, even so would I approach that man (who reads the Gitā). Hence I am pleased by the mere utterance of My name by persons like Ajāmila and Kshatrabandhu. So also shall I be pleased with him (who thus reads the Gitā).

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान् प्राप्नुयात् पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१ ॥

71. A person who merely hears (the Gitā) with devotion and without cavilling shall be freed and attain the blessed spheres attained by men of righteous deeds.

The fruit that comes even to one who hears while another is reading (the Gitā) is being stated: *Even* etc. *A person who merely hears with devotion*—even one who hears with devotion may captiously think, ‘Why is he reading so loudly and without restraint?’; in order to exclude such a person the Lord says— *and who hears without cavilling, shall also*

*be freed from all sins, and attain the spheres attained by men of righteous deeds like the horse sacrifice.*

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।

कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥ ७२ ॥

72. Have you listened to it O Pārtha, with undivided attention? Has your delusion due to ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?

‘If complete knowledge has not dawned, I shall teach you again’— with this intention the Lord asks: Have you etc. ‘Whether’ is interrogative. *Delusion due to ignorance*, wrong notion arising out of ignorance of the Truth. The rest is clear.

अर्जुन उवाच ।

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वप्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३ ॥

Arjuna said:

73. My delusion is destroyed, and I have gained my memory, through Your grace, O Achyuta. I stand; free from doubt I will carry out Your behest.

Being blessed, *Arjuna* said: My *delusion* etc. (My) *delusion* about the Self is destroyed, for I have

*gained my memory, consisting in the realization of one's nature as, 'I am this', through your grace. Therefore I stand, arise for battle. I, who am free from doubt about my duties will carry out Your command.*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।

संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ ७४ ॥

74. Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Vasudeva and the high-souled Pārtha, that causes my hair to stand on end.

Thus having narrated to Dhritarāshtra the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, *Sanjaya*, resuming the thread of the narrative, said: *Thus etc. I have heard the dialogue that causes my hair to stand on end, causes horripilation.*

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।

योगं योगेश्वरात् कृष्णात् साक्षात् कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ ७५ ॥

75. Through the grace of Vyasa I have heard this supreme and secret Yoga direct from Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, as He declared it Himself.



He describes the possibility of his hearing that dialogue: *Through* etc. Bhagavān Vyasa gave me divine eyes, ears. etc. Therefore *through the grace of Vyasa I have heard this*. What was it? This is being stated: *Supreme Yoga*. The supremeness is being revealed: I have heard it *direct from Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, as He declared it Himself*.

राजन् संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।

केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ७६ ॥

76. O king, recalling often this wonderful and sacred dialogue between Keshava and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

Further, *O king* etc. *I rejoice*, I get horripilation; or it may mean, I find joy. The rest is clear.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।

विस्मयो मे महात् राजन् हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ ७७ ॥

77. And as I repeatedly recall that most wonderful form of Hari, great is my wonder, O king, and I rejoice again and again.

Further, *And* etc. *That* refers to the cosmic form. The rest is clear.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीविजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ ७८ ॥

78. Where there is Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and where there is Pārtha, the wielder of the bow, there are sure fortune, victory, prosperity and statesmanship. Such is my conviction.

With the intention of telling (Dhritarāshtra), 'Therefore better give up the hope of your sons' getting the kingdom etc.', Sanjaya says: *Where etc. Where, on which side, there is Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and where there is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there itself is fortune, sovereign power, there, itself is victory, there itself is prosperity, ever increasing opulence, and there itself is statesmanship. 'Sure' qualifies all these (four) terms. Such is my opinion, conviction. Therefore, even now, with your sons, take refuge in Sri Krishna, satisfy the Pāṇḍavas and offer everything to them, and thus save your sons—this is the idea.*

He who is devoted to the Lord easily attains freedom from bondage by means of the knowledge of the Self attained through His grace—this is the essence of the Teaching of the Gītā. For instance, since in texts like, "That supreme Being, O Pārtha, is attainable by one-pointed devotion" (VIII. 22),

"But by undivided devotion, O Arjuna, can I in this form be known" etc. (XI.54), the devotion to the Lord is declared to be the most potent means to Liberation, it is clear that one-pointed devotion alone, coupled with the knowledge of the Self—which serves merely as an intermediate operation of it—which is attained through His grace, is the means to Liberation. And the knowledge of the Self can reasonably be only an intermediate operation, as is evident from texts like, "To those who are thus ever devoted to Me and worship Me with love, I give that Yoga of understanding by which they come unto Me" (X. 10); "Knowing thus, My devotee becomes fit to attain My being" (XIII.18). It cannot be said with reason that knowledge itself is devotion, for the two have been shown to be distinct in texts like, "Alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me" (XVIII. 54); "By devotion he knows Me truly, how much and what I am" etc. (XVIII. 55). Nor is there any apprehension of a contradiction with Sruti texts like, "Knowing Him alone one goes beyond death, there is no other way to go by" (Svet.3.8; 6.15), for knowledge is an intermediate operation of devotion. From the statement, "one is cooking with fuel," it does not follow that flames are not a means. It is only thus that Sruti, Smriti and Puranic texts like, "For the great soul who has supreme devotion to the deity and to an equal extent for the preceptor, do these truths shine forth when taught" (Svet.

6.23); "At death the Lord instructs about the re-deeming supreme Brahman" (Nri. Pur. 1.7); "By whomsoever the Self chooses is It attained" (Kath. 2.22), are harmonized. Therefore it is established that devotion to the Lord alone is the means to Liberation.

With the understanding granted by Him alone has this gloss on His Gitā been composed. May that Mādhava, the supreme Bliss, be pleased with this. This commentary on the Gitā called 'Subodhini' is just completed by the monk, Sridhara Swami, who has put on the glory that is bestowed by the dust of the lotus feet of the supreme blessed Lord.

Does a person who desires to attain the Truths inculcated in the Bhagavad-Gita by stirring it on the strength of his own proficiency, realize them without the gracious nectarean look of the Guru? Does not a person who desires to get the jewels that lie at the bottom of the ocean by bailing out the water with the hollow of his hands, get drowned in the eddies, unless he is helped by an able helmsman?

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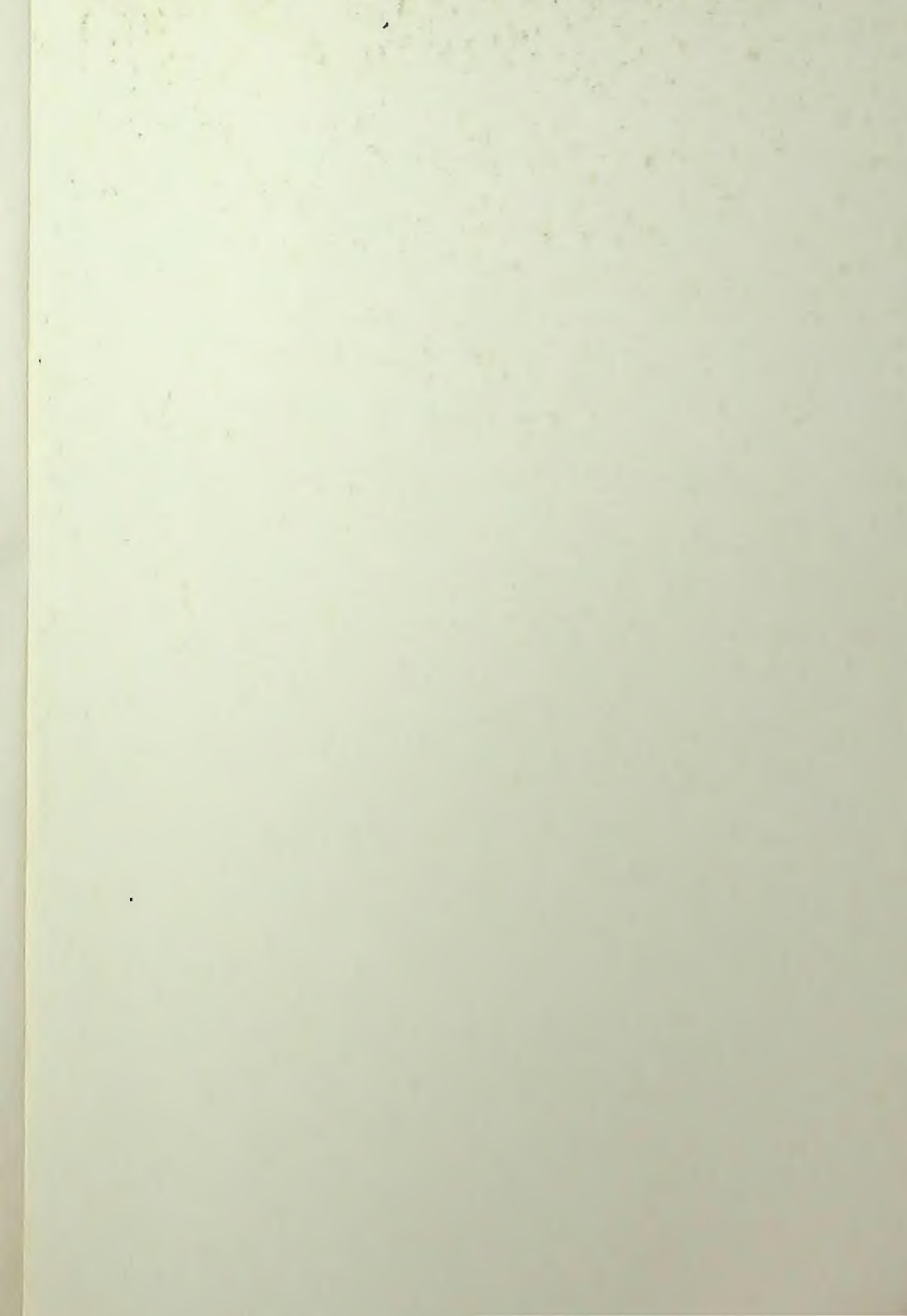
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ISBN 81-7120-402-3

Than the Gita no better commentary on the Vedas has been written or can be written. The essence of the Shrutis, or of the Upanishads, is hard to be understood, seeing that there are so many commentaros, each one trying to interpret in his own way. Then the Lord Himself comes, He who is the inspirer of the Shrutis, to show us the meaning of them, as the preacher of the Gita, and today India wants nothing better than that method of interpretation.

— *Swami Vivekananda.*